

THE TIMES

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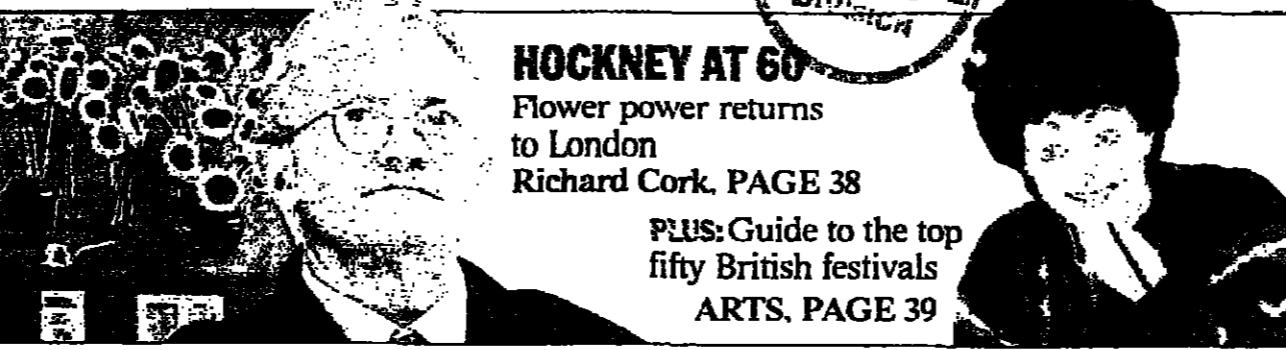
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WEDNESDAY MARCH 19 1997



TIE SOCIETY
Grace Bradberry
on men who win
by a neck

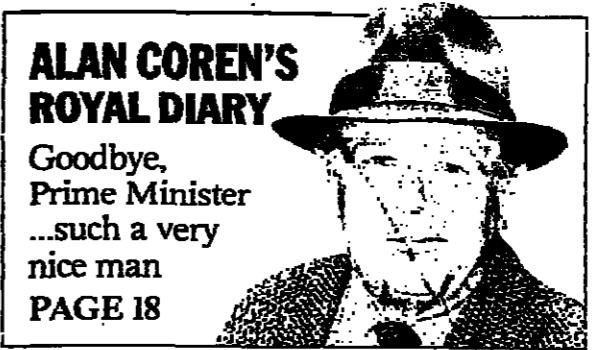
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HOCKNEY AT 60

Flower power returns
to London
Richard Cork, PAGE 38

PLUS: Guide to the top
fifty British festivals
ARTS, PAGE 39



**ALAN COREN'S
ROYAL DIARY**

Goodbye,
Prime Minister
...such a very
nice man
PAGE 18

Shephard attack on Labour as education Bill is casualty of last-minute deal to clear decks

Tories forced to abandon school plans

By PHILIP WEBSTER, ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND JANET BUSH

FLAGSHIP plans to allow greater selection and the expansion of grant-maintained schools were sacrificed by the Government yesterday in the rush to clear the legislative decks before Parliament rises on Friday for the general election.

On the second day of the election campaign, Conservative business managers were forced, during negotiations with their Labour counterparts, to drop 19 clauses from the education Bill, including plans which they said would pave the way for a grammar school in every large town.

The Tories reacted angrily last night. Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, claimed that Labour had "shown themselves in their true colours. However much they pretend, we now know what Labour really believes. They are opposed to excellence, opposed to choice, opposed to diversity, indifferent to standards of good behaviour." She said that Labour had ignored the wishes of four out of five voters who want selection in schools.

The proposals were the main casualty of the horse-trading between the Labour and Tory whips, which was designed to get as much legislation through as possible before MPs depart.

In return, Labour has agreed to accept the Bill's proposal to extend to preparatory schools the assisted places scheme, which it is committed to phasing out.

Another minister said: "This

proves that Labour is against selection, apart from those members of the front-bench who want it for their own children."

The Government pledged, however, to bring back the proposals in its election manifesto and to make them a substantial campaigning

TV WATCH
NICHOLAS WAPSHOTT

• Blair was not flustered, but you could tell by his face that he is rarely spoken to like this. He is used to being applauded.

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theme. The bulk of the Bill's clauses will remain, including those increasing discipline, introducing home-school contracts between schools and parents. Ofsted inspection powers over local education authorities, assessments of primary schools entering primary and targets for improving standards in schools.

Regulation of supply teachers and reforms to the careers service will also survive under the whip's agreement.

In another deal last night, Labour agreed to allow through the crime Bill proposed by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary. However, it will support a Lords amendment giving judges more discretion over minimum sentences. The vote Commons vote is expected tomorrow and it appears likely that the Government will be able to overturn the defeat it sustained last month.

Mrs Shephard was also defeated over the education Bill last month, when peers supported moves that would require schools planning to increase selection to consult affected neighbouring schools. Any objections would trigger a local public inquiry. The Lords defeat came after MPs rejected government plans to relax controls on grant-maintained schools, allowing them to increase by 50 per cent the proportion of pupils selected by ability.

The behind-the-scenes manœuvres took place yesterday as the main parties began marking out the battle lines for the campaign.

Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, set out his plans to impose a windfall tax on the privatised utilities, although his refusal to name the companies affected was described as disgraceful by the Tories. Mr Brown claimed that a damning all-party report on

Continued on page 2, col 5

Soapbox John breaks out again, armed and dangerous

Major's minders may care to note that to get their man's adrenaline flowing, all they need do is drive him to a market square anywhere in England and invite a crowd of yobs to shout at him for an hour. Back from Luton, the Prime Minister entered the Chamber spelling for a fight.

John Major seems to have moved on in his imagination from the Commons chamber, and is now permanently on his soapbox. There were moments at Prime Minister's Questions when he looked ready to grab the Dispatch box, fling it to the floor and stand on it. Tony

Blair, brandishing a sheaf of notes, tackled him on health service funding. Citizens should be warned not to approach Mr Major on this subject over the coming six weeks, as he is armed and extremely dangerous.

The PM let fly a positive arsenal of facts and statistics, waving his arms, shouting, then crouching back on his bench like a bar-room pugilist being restrained with difficulty from gassing his opponent in the face. The Leader of the Opposition, whose inquiry had sounded reasonable enough, retreated under a hail of data. Earlier, the Prime

Minister had even attacked Simon Hughes. Attacking Mr Hughes (Lib Dem, Southwark & Bermondsey) is the political equivalent of stoning the budge.

A decent, earnest, harmless man, who does go on a bit, Hughes's question got rather bogged down. He had begun: "The Prime Minister made a uniquely personal decision to call the election for I May..." "We know that!" shouted a

was to give him time to finish his question.

Major was not alone in his rush of pre-election aggression. Something seems to have happened to Stephen Dorrell in recent weeks which, to long-standing Dorrell-watchers, is rather disturbing. Previously a rational man, the Health Secretary now does little but shout.

At Health Questions yesterday, he started a sort of playground chant. Unlike the Opposition (he yelled) this Government was pledged to increase NHS spending "year on year, on year, on year, on year". All the Tory crawlers

behind him took up the refrain in mockingbird chorus: "year, on year, on year, on year" they bawled. Then Mr Dorrell tried it again. The Tories would increase spending, as they had over the last 18 years, "year, on year, on year, on year, on year".

For a dreadful moment we thought Dorrell was going to repeat this eighteen times. The stunt was stupid, the effect displeasing.

This palpable Left-winger is hoping to earn his spurs among the thug tendency in his party by playing King of the Kids. He should remember what happened to the last Tory Wet who tried this:

David Hunt. Not that anything made much sense yesterday. Labour's Rachel Squire (Dunfermline W) accused ministers of "closing thousands of elderly NHS beds." Andrew Mackinlay (Lab, Thurrock) was cross that the Transport Select Committee would be unable "to interview South West trains".

And the Prime Minister capped the lot. "More NHS patients are being created!" he announced.

We would advise Mr Major that turning electors — or indeed sentences — into stretcher cases is best left to John Prescott.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Teachers warn of boycott on reports

Teachers yesterday threatened to boycott national curriculum assessments and called for a ten-fold increase in the number of pupils expelled and sent to special schools. Failure to cut "unnecessary" assessment and report-writing would lead to a ballot on a boycott within a year, the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers said.

The union's also called for the limit on an unpromised teacher's salary to rise to £30,000. In return, teachers would be accept tougher checks on competence.

CSA complaints

The Whitehall ombudsman dealt with more complaints about the Child Support Agency than any other branch of government. They represented a quarter of the total caseload of almost 2,000 complaints, according to the annual report from Michael Buckley, the newly appointed ombudsman.

Island offer

Islanders in Harris, in the Hebrides, have been offered a possible £12 million by landowners to accept a giant opencast quarry. The offer, over its 60-year life, is 2p per tonne of minerals sold. The quarry operators have already offered a community trust fund of £140,000 a year at peak production.

Water all-clear

More than 300,000 homes in parts of Hertfordshire and north London have been told they no longer have to boil their water, which had been contaminated with a bacterium. Three Valleys Water said that samples taken over the past five days had shown no trace of the cryptosporidium bug.

Prison inquest

A diabetic thief was found dead two days after being sent to Lincoln jail, an inquest was told yesterday. Brett Hay, 31, of Ipswich, had telephoned his wife hours earlier, saying he would die unless she alerted the authorities, but her efforts to contact his solicitor on a Sunday last July failed. The hearing continues.

Smile wiped off

A sculptor has redesigned a bronze relief of the Queen, which she is due to unveil at a Nottinghamshire school, after he was advised not to show her smiling. Sir Andrew Buchanan, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, was unhappy with Gordon Brown's work because it showed the Queen's teeth.

Suspect revealed



Video still pictures of a sex attacker suspected of 19 assaults on women in the West Midlands were released by police. The images were taken by a camera inside a cash machine in Birmingham where he used credit cards stolen from a victim. Police believe he has been hiding since his attacks were featured on BBC's Crimewatch.

Wife tells husband dead in

Major denies he sabotaged report on MP's sleaze

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR and Liberal Democrat MPs expressed dismay yesterday that the report by Sir Gordon Downey, the standards commissioner, into the "cash-for-questions" affair will be kept a secret until after the general election.

John Major's decision to prorogue Parliament on Friday scuppered the publication of the Downey report into allegations against Neil Hamilton, a former minister, and other Tory MPs. Sir Gordon, who began his inquiry in October, when he was urged by the Speaker to conclude a swift investigation, is expected to complete the 150-page dossier early next week. Because of the prorogation, the Select Committee on Standards and Privileges, which was to have considered the report, will have disbanded.

In the Commons yesterday, Mr Major denied that the imminent publication of the report had influenced his timing of the election announcement and hence of when Parliament would rise. He said that he had had "no knowledge" of when Sir Gordon was to present his report to the select committee which is chaired by Tony Newton, the Leader of the Commons.

After the election, the Nolan committee, set up by Mr Major to report on standards

in public life, will produce a report on the performance of Sir Gordon and of the privates committee. The failure to publish the cash-for-questions report will dominate the Nolan inquiry. Sir Gordon has investigated allegations that MPs received cash to table questions in the Commons. He also looked at payments to 30 MPs fighting funds from the lobbyist Ian Greer.

Sir Gordon's report will not be seen by any MPs or the people to whom it refers. It will be locked in a safe in his office until after the campaign.

Members of the Standards Committee were furious at the postponement of publication. Nigel Jones, Liberal Democrat MP for Cheltenham, said:

"Serious allegations have surfaced in the media against MPs that will not be answered before polling day."

In future, an independent organisation should investigate self-regulation of MPs by MPs does not work."

The Tory leadership, which had been braced for damaging headlines on the eve of the election, will be relieved that time has run out for Sir Gordon. Labour, which had hoped to capitalise on Tory "sleaze", will be infuriated.

Other Tory MPs under investigation include Michael Brown, MP for Brigg & Cleethorpes, Tim Smith, MP for Beaconsfield, and Sir Michael Grylls who is retiring as MP for Surrey North West.

Labour accused the Prime Minister of opting for a six-week election campaign, to avoid further damaging "sleaze" disclosures. Brian Wilson, Labour's campaign spokesman, said that the country was wondering why there was to be such a long campaign. "Perhaps we now have the reason. If Mr Major had allowed Parliament to hang around for another week he would have been facing what is potentially the most explosive report on the conduct of MPs this century."

Leading article, page 19



Downey: publication was expected next week



Thatcher papers on loan

Continued from page 1
namesake, the Conservative MP for Davyhulme, put the papers up for sale despite their long-term residence in the college named after his grandfather. Eventually, the papers were bought for the nation with a £1.25 million National

Lottery grant. A spokesman for Lady Thatcher said yesterday that her children Mark and Carol were delighted with the Churchill College arrangement. Their mother has given the college £25,000 to pay for an archivist for a year to begin cataloguing her papers.

Brown and Clarke clash in windfall tax confusion

BY JILL SHERMAN AND CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

GORDON BROWN and Kenneth Clarke clashed yesterday over Labour's proposed windfall tax on privatised utilities amid renewed confusion over which companies might have to pay the levy.

While sources close to Gordon Brown said that the airports operator BAA and British Telecom would be liable for the tax, other leadership figures insisted it was unlikely that these two firms would be affected.

Mr Clarke said the tax would present a "serious threat" to the country's continued recovery by imposing higher energy charges on both industry and consumers. The Chancellor said it was a "disgrace" that Mr Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, still refused to name the companies that would be affected by the tax which is expected to be introduced within weeks of a Labour election victory.

Mr Brown said he would not name the firms, because it would only be fair to do so in government after consultation with the regulators. But his aides said the tax could apply to all utilities privatised since 1979 which were regulated by statute.

The party's legal advisers say that Labour cannot name individual companies as this would be seen as unfair discrimination and could affect the markets. But Mr Brown's aides insisted that any regulated and licensed privatised

utility would be liable to be taxed if it made excess profits.

British Telecommunications, the airports operator BAA, Railtrack, British Gas and electricity and water companies all fall into this category.

But some sources later said it was unlikely that BT or BAA would have to pay. "All companies are liable, but that does not mean that all have to pay," said one. "Gas, electricity and water companies are the most likely to be hit."

Later Labour seized on an all-party committee report on how the energy industries have been controlled and regulated as justification for the windfall tax.

Law price controls, excessive profits and a burden for the taxpayers through large job losses in electricity and gas were highlighted in the Trade and Industry Select Committee's investigation into energy regulation.

Martin O'Neill, the Labour chairman of the trade and industry committee said the report, which looks at how the independent regulators have controlled the gas and electricity companies since they were privatised, makes the case quite clear for some form of tax.

But John Butterfill, a Conservative member of the committee, said: "To suggest that we should have a windfall tax on the back of this report is a travesty."

Peerges

Continued from page 1
list and he hopes his ideas will become the norm.

After the 1992 election he created 21 life peers of whom ten, including Baroness Thatcher, had served in Conservative Cabinets.

Eight former Cabinet ministers and two former chief whips leave the Commons on Friday when the present session of Parliament ends. They are: Kenneth Baker, John Biffen, Paul Channon, Douglas Hurd, Michael Jopling, Sir Patrick Mayhew, John Patten, David Howell and the two former Chief Whips, Tim Renton and Richard Ryder.

According to informed sources Mr Hurd, the former Foreign Secretary, and Sir Patrick, the Northern Ireland Secretary, are certain to receive peerages. Almost certainly on the list are Mr Ryder, Chief Whip for much of Mr Major's premiership, and Mr Jopling, Chief Whip and Agriculture Minister under Lady Thatcher.

Non-ministers who might be rewarded include Dame Jill Knight, Sir Peter Hordern, Sir Terence Higgins, Sir Fergus Montgomery and Sir James Spicer.

Mr Major's expected move is also likely to be seen as a way to bring more discipline to the parliamentary party.

Tories defy Major over immigration

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TORY MPs in the West Midlands carried out their threat yesterday to publish a joint statement criticising Labour Party plans to weaken immigration rules.

The unanimous decision yesterday has signalled that many Tory MPs will play the race card in the general election campaign despite appeals from the Prime Minister not to do so.

But there was confusion over the position of senior Tories. A government whip, who attended the private meeting at the Commons last night, conspicuously failed to voice any criticism of the MPs' plan. Derek Conway, MP for Shrewsbury and Atcham, and the West Midlands Tory Whip was silent throughout the hour-long meeting.

In a new twist, sources close to the Prime Minister indicated last night that, contrary to his public strictures to MPs not to raise immigration on the hustings, he was sympathetic to the actions of the West Midland group of Tory MPs. Earlier this month Mr Major slapped down Nicho-

las Budgen, the MP for Wolverhampton South West, when he voiced concern over Labour's proposals during Prime Minister's Question Time. Mr Budgen highlighted Labour's plan to change the rule that gaining entry to Britain was not the primary purpose of an immigrant marrying a British citizen. Labour would also introduce a right of appeal for those refused a visitor's visa.

The senior Tory source said last night: "John Major misinterpreted the question from Nick Budgen because he never heard what he was saying. He [Mr Major] believes strongly that we have got good race relations because we have such strong laws. He also believes that we have to limit the numbers. He thinks that immigration is becoming a big problem in Europe."

The disclosure of Mr Major's private thoughts will be seized on by Labour MPs who have long suspected that Tory MPs in inner city seats would exploit fears over immigration. It comes after Mr Major slapped down Nicho-

las Budgen, the MP for Wolverhampton South West, when he voiced concern over Labour's proposals during Prime Minister's Question Time. Mr Budgen highlighted Labour's plan to change the rule that gaining entry to Britain was not the primary purpose of an immigrant marrying a British citizen. Labour would also introduce a right of appeal for those refused a visitor's visa.

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With all the polls pointing to a Labour election victory, there was also private satisfaction for the Labour leadership in the latest figures for the public finances. These suggest that this year's budget deficit is set to come in well below target, which would ease pressure on a Labour government.

However, Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, seized on the figures as giving the lie to Labour claims that there's any problem with the public finances, which we have under control". Healthy tax

receipts, reflecting robust economic growth, limited public borrowing last month to £3.6 billion, less than the City had been expecting. With only one month of the present financial year to go, cumulative borrowing has totalled £14.1 billion, well below the £22.2 billion figure recorded at the same stage a year ago.

Economists are expecting public borrowing for the year to fall well below Mr Clarke's Budget forecast in November of £26.4 billion, perhaps by as much as £2 to £3 billion.

John Major was again in upbeat form during his penultimate Question Time clash with Tony Blair. After the Labour leader claimed his party would slash bureaucracy to rebuild the NHS, the Prime Minister replied that while Labour might have set up the health service, the Tories had built it up.

Tory plans dropped

Continued from page 1
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Battling For Cheaper Car Insurance?

Continued from page 1
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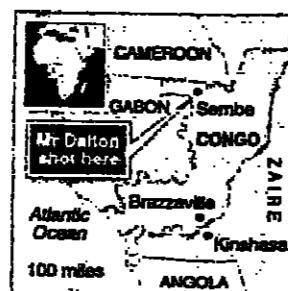
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Surgeon 'died in my arms'

Wife tells how husband was shot dead in Congo

By BILL FROST



A BRITISH surgeon died in his wife's arms after being shot at a remote police checkpoint in the Congo when he argued with armed policemen, his family disclosed yesterday.

Benjamin Dalton's widow, Diana, a member of the six-strong party heading overland for South Africa, described how she called out his name as he lost consciousness. "He just opened his eyes and died in my arms," she said.

"We had reached a checkpoint at Sembé [50 miles from the border with Cameroon]. An argument started — it was over nothing," she said.

"Then one or two of the policemen started to become angry and began threatening us with their guns. Benjamin grabbed me by the arms and said 'run'. I heard a number of shots and thought 'My God, they are going to kill us'."

"I saw Benjamin fall. I bent down to him and saw the blood running down his back."

Mr Dalton, 29, is believed to have argued with police at the checkpoint over their demand for a bribe in return for safe onward passage. However, a Foreign Office spokesman said it was unclear what

daughter-in-law had wanted to spend time travelling overland from London to South Africa before professional commitments and family life tied them to Britain.

It is thought that Ben Dalton, recently qualified as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, died instantly after being shot in the chest.

Mr Dalton's brother, Will, 26, said last night that the family were aghast at the stupidity of the killing. He dismissed as "unbelievable" a suggestion that the row with the policeman had been sparked by his brother.

Ben was an experienced traveller and he was used to paying bribes. He was not silly or naive."

Before leaving Britain yesterday for the capital Brazzaville, the dead man's father said that his son had taken issue with a truculent official at the checkpoint. Bill Dalton, a schools inspector from Peckham in southeast London, said that his daughter-in-law had told him by telephone that a young official with a Kalashnikov was being obstructive and overbearing.

Ben said he was going to report him. He should have known better; he has been on the road before."

Mr Dalton said that his son was chased by policemen after the argument. "Someone else, we do not know who, shot Ben through the heart," he added.

He said that his son and

Robert Ham, consultant general surgeon at the Royal London, said: "He excelled as a keen, caring and expert clinician and was a skilled and committed surgeon with his whole career in front of him."

Mr Dalton had also worked as a senior house officer in the casualty department for the Mid Essex Health Authority in 1993. He then moved to the Oldchurch Hospital, Romford, Essex, from 1993 to 1995.

The Daltons lived in a flat in southeast London, near Tower Bridge. Tom Bingham, the manager, said that although the surgeon was "a very busy man he always had time and a good word for everyone."

The west London specialist travel firm Trailfinders said yesterday that the Daltons had taken out a worldwide insurance policy lasting for eight months.

The Foreign Office has called for a full report on Mr Dalton's death from the Congolese authorities. Britain does not have an embassy in the country so the inquiry is being co-ordinated by diplomats in Zaire.

The dead man's widow and parents were last night met by a British honorary consul in Brazzaville. It is unclear when Mr Dalton's body will be released to his family.

The Foreign Office has repeated a warning that tourists could be at risk from bandits in some areas of the Congo. While Brazzaville was "generally quiet", visitors were advised to be very careful on the streets at night.



Benjamin and Diana Dalton on their wedding day

Man killed after row with youths

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

A MAN who went to the aid of a disabled woman being taunted by a gang of youths was kicked and beaten to death early yesterday.

Michael Stevenson, 43, who was attending a St Patrick's night celebration at a club in Langley, Berkshire, saw the youths intimidating the woman and told them to stop but was ignored. One witness said that Mr Stevenson, from Langley, headbutted one of the youths, which resulted in further threats.

When he left the club later the gang was waiting outside and attacked him. Mr Stevenson, a security guard who was separated from his wife and had a 15-year-old son, was taken to hospital in Slough but was certified dead on arrival.

Two men aged 20 and 22 from the Slough area were being held in custody last night.

Killer of bullying father walks free

By A STAFF REPORTER

A MAN who killed his bullying father after the family had been subjected to years of physical and mental abuse walked free from the Old Bailey yesterday. Malcolm McCarthy, 26, stabbed his father Terence, 53, eight times in the chest.

The court was told that Mr McCarthy had threatened to kill his wife Sylvia and daughter Megan, 23, shortly before his death. Judge Denison, QC, the Common Serjeant of London, said McCarthy had acted to protect his sister.

McCarthy admitted manslaughter on the grounds of provocation. He was given a two-year jail sentence, suspended for two years, after the judge said there were "wholly exceptional circumstances".

The court was told that Malcolm McCarthy, who was described as a "gentle giant", tried to avoid arguments with his father. On the night of the

murder, he was fined and ordered to do 200 hours' community service. Sheriff Alexander Eccles said the weapon, currently in police custody, would not be confiscated provided it was passed to another member of the family.

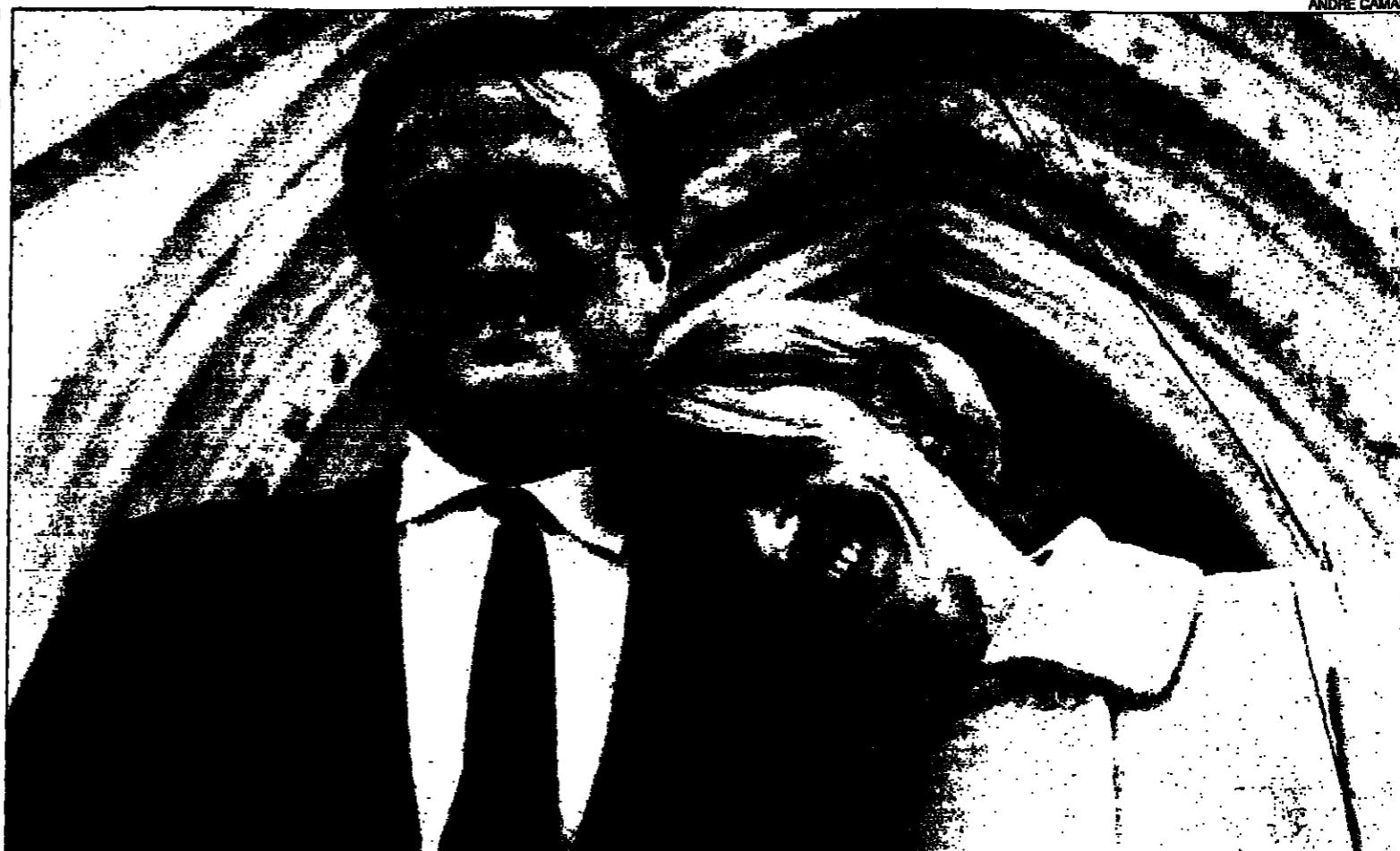
The court was told that MacKinnon learnt to shoot at the age of eight on his father's estate in Oxfordshire. He was not carrying ammunition at the time of the offence. His gun licence may now be revoked.

MacKinnon, of Kensington, London, had been on his way to join wealthy friends in the Highlands for a shooting party. Stirling Sheriff Court

was told that the guard asked him to leave the train, and threw his luggage after him, when he ignored repeated warnings to stop smoking.

MacKinnon said that he had removed the gun from its leather case and assembled the stock and barrel to check if it had been damaged. The rare gun had belonged to his grandfather.

MacKinnon pleaded guilty to placing people in fear and alarm at Criarlarich station, Stirling. He also admitted being drunk in charge of a



Richard Wilmot-Smith and his wife, Jenny, outside the High Court after the case. Mr Wilmot-Smith said it was not a time for triumphalism

Telegraph faces £850,000 bill over libel

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE Daily Telegraph last night faced a £350,000 bill for damages plus legal costs of well over £500,000 after a jury found it had libelled a barrister and his psychic healer wife by claiming that they had brainwashed a solicitor into leaving his family.

The High Court jury awarded £250,000 to Richard Wilmot-Smith, QC, 44, a leading commercial barrister, and £100,000 to his wife, Jenny, 48. The couple had sued over an article of March 1995, entitled Dark Side of the New Age, about "a case of alternative therapy that left a man in tatters".

The jury also found for the solicitor, Stephen Kirby, 41, a partner in the London firm of Reynolds Porter Chamberlain, who sued the Telegraph in a separate related action.

His damages will not be assessed until today.

In a case described by George Carman, QC, for the Telegraph, as "exposing human nature in the raw", the newspaper alleged that the Wilmot-Smiths had brainwashed Mr Kirby after he sought the psychic healer's help in curing him of agonising headaches. The article stated that ten months after starting sessions with Mrs Wilmot-Smith, Mr Kirby demanded a divorce from his wife Clare, 41, whom he accused of causing his headaches.

The judge had told the jury that they faced the task of deciding whether Mrs Wilmot-Smith was acting as a "good samaritan or a wicked witch". Mrs Kirby, who is awaiting a divorce, had claimed in court that Mrs Wilmot-Smith was a charlatan. She claimed that the couple effectively held him hostage at their home in Sevenoaks, Kent.

But Mrs Wilmot-Smith claimed that she merely acted as a confidante. She denied that she had forbidden Mr Kirby to see his wife and said she had urged him to talk to her about their relationship. Her psychic gift had been used to treat hundreds of people but since she had been unable to

while she sought to clear her name. She and her husband said that the article, which was next to one about cults and sects, robbed them of their integrity.

Patrick Moloney, for Mr Kirby, said that the claim that he was a "hypnotised puppet" was a serious libel of a respected professional. Mr Kirby, from Islington, north London, said that sexual difficulties in his marriage and the birth of his children had led him into three affairs that left him feeling guilty.

Mr Wilmot-Smith, a commercial lawyer and part-time judge who represented himself and his wife in the action,

said afterwards: "This case has been very much in the public eye in respect of matters which ought to have been private at all times. It's been a test for everybody, not just us but our opponents and the Kirby family. This is certainly not a time for triumphalism."

Mr Justice Roughton put a stay of execution of £100,000 on Mr Wilmot-Smith's damages and £25,000 on his wife's pending an appeal. Mr Carman said he would argue that the damages should be reduced in line with guidance laid down in the case of Elton John, whose libel award in November 1993 of £350,000 was reduced to £75,000.

A spokesman for the newspaper said: "We very much hope that those members of the Kirby family who have found themselves on opposite sides will in due course be reconciled."

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Smoking gun bags £5,000 fine

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A DRUNKEN marketing executive who frightened passengers and staff at a remote railway station with his antique shotgun was fined £5,000 yesterday.

Alexander MacKinnon, 27, pointed the double-barrelled weapon, worth about £30,000, at a guard after being ordered off a Glasgow to Fort William train for smoking.

MacKinnon, of Kensington, London, had been on his way to join wealthy friends in the Highlands for a shooting party. Stirling Sheriff Court

was told that the guard asked him to leave the train, and threw his luggage after him, when he ignored repeated warnings to stop smoking.

MacKinnon said that he had removed the gun from its leather case and assembled the stock and barrel to check if it had been damaged. The rare gun had belonged to his grandfather.

MacKinnon pleaded guilty to placing people in fear and alarm at Criarlarich station, Stirling. He also admitted being drunk in charge of a

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CDs are new weapon in supermarket price war

BY ADRIAN LEE

A PRICE war has erupted between supermarkets which are offering big discounts on Top 40 compact discs in an effort to win a larger share of the lucrative music market.

The cost of some chart albums has been cut to less than £10 as chains including Asda, Tesco and Safeway compete to encourage customers to buy their food and music under the same roof.

The aggressive discounting has upset traditional music outlets but has been welcomed by consumer groups. Asda is now the fourth-biggest music retailer and has seen nearly a 25 per cent rise in music sales in the past year. Tesco claims its chart CD prices are the cheapest in the country.

"Marketing opportunities on the food side are more difficult, so supermarkets are looking at other areas," an Asda spokesman said. Its biggest stores now stock more than 2,000 titles and it is introducing signing sessions by bands and listening posts where customers can hear albums before they buy.

A Tesco spokesman said: "We are taking CD sales extremely seriously. All our research shows that custom-



Definitely Maybe, Oasis

	Asda	Tesco	Safeway	Woolworths	Virgin	HMV, New York	FNAC, Paris
£11.99	£13.99	£15.99	£14.99	£13.49	£10.85	£8.30	£15.90
£10.99	£12.99 (red to £10.99)	£12.99	£12.99	£13.99	£10.85	£8.30	£12.73

£10.99

Spice, the Spice Girls

	Asda	Tesco	Safeway	Woolworths	Virgin	HMV, New York	FNAC, Paris
£10.99	£13.99	£15.99	£14.99	£13.49	£10.85	£8.30	£15.90
£10.99	£12.99 (red to £10.99)	£12.99	£12.99	£13.99	£10.85	£8.30	£12.73

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Cricket boss stumped as behind is caught in beach competition

By STEPHEN FARRELL



MEMBERS of the country's oldest first-class cricket club whose eyes strayed from *Wisden* in the off-season were surprised to find the nude figure of their beleaguered club secretary gracing the pages of *British Naturism* magazine.

On the eve of Sussex County Cricket Club's annual general meeting, Nigel Bett's naked appearance in the glossy quarterly has distracted attention from his efforts to stop the club committee being swept away by a new regime.

Mr Bett, 57, posed for his wife Barbara on a beach in Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, wearing just a strategically placed black-and-white scarf. They entered the picture in an annual British Naturism competition offering £100, £50 and £25 prizes for the best photograph by a reader.

Although they failed to land a prize, the picture proved ideal to illustrate an article by another naturist on the joys of strolling naked among the island's drifting sand dunes and shrub-covered hillocks.

The chances of identification were slim. Mr Bett appeared from the rear only, was not named, and the magazine has a circulation of just 12,000 members who pay the £20 family or £16 single subscription. However, one keen-eyed reader spotted his wife Barbara's name in the

caption and alerted the *Brighton Evening Argus* newspaper, which featured the story prominently under the headline: "Cheeky pic leaves Nigel blushing."

Mr Bett admitted all, telling the paper: "This is a picture of me. It was taken by my wife. It is a place where people can sunbathe with their clothes off. I think what people do in their private lives is up to them."

Yesterday he did not turn up for work at the club, where weightier matters were under discussion. The former Sussex fast bowler Tony Pigott is trying to overthrow the board with a motion of no confidence, which will be raised at today's meeting and formally discussed at an extraordinary general meeting on April 8.

Sussex, founded in 1839, has never won the county champ-

ionship and was last runner-up in 1981. Its committee has long faced accusations of mis-handling players and the club has recently fallen into crisis with the loss of six senior cricketers during the winter.

Mr Pigott said he had no plans to raise the nude picture at either meeting: "There are more serious matters facing Sussex, such as achieving the vote of no confidence and getting new faces and new ideas on the committee."

However, one angry member despaired at yet another round of unfavourable publicity: "This is the last thing we need. He should not be entering nude pictures in magazine competitions. He is supposed to be an ambassador for Sussex County Cricket Club."

Robert Griffiths, the club's marketing director, said: "I am not aware that we have received any complaints from our members. Our primary concern is to prepare for the meeting."

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County in turmoil, page 48

The Who guitarist clashes with lawyer for Bowbelle

PETE TOWNSHEND, leader of The Who, was accused yesterday of exaggerating the potential of a musician whose career was destroyed by the *Marchioness* riverboat disaster in order to boost her claim for compensation (Kathryn Knight writes).

Josephine Wells, 37, has been unable to work as a saxophonist since being trapped underwater for three minutes when the pleasure cruiser collided with the sand dredger *Bowbelle* on the Thames in August 1989.

Mr Townshend, 53, told the High Court that Ms Wells was an "absolutely exceptional" musician, "the best soprano saxophone player I have ever heard in pop", an unassuming figure who burst into life when she was playing.

Since working with her on a session for an album in 1986,

he told Mr Justice Kay, he had been quite intimidated by how good Ms Wells was and had never forgotten her.

"I was constantly looking out for her. I always wanted to know what she was up to," he said.

He added that he had written 20 hit records with

The Who in a career that began in 1963, and had become a good judge of

musicianship.

The owners of *Marchioness* and *Bowbelle* accept liability but are contesting the amount of damages claiming Ms Wells was burnt out before the accident and had not played professionally for 18 months. The case continues.



Wells has been unable to work since tragedy

statement under oath. I am 53 years old. I am a mature individual. I'm aware of what I'm telling you. I did not contribute to my biography under oath otherwise I would spend my life under oath.

"I am somebody with the experience of the best possible scenario. This is always a possible reality to someone who is as unique and special as is Jo."

Mr Townshend was giving evidence on the second day of

a damages claim by Ms Wells against the owners of the *Marchioness* and *Bowbelle*. The court has been told that Ms Wells suffered severe

Film censor gives green light to Crash

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A CONTROVERSIAL film which explores the sexual gratification derived from seeing bodies mutilated in car crashes will be shown in Britain. David Cronenberg's *Crash*, inspired by J.G. Ballard's novel, received the green light yesterday from the British Board of Film Censors, which awarded it an "18" certificate without cuts.

The board went to great lengths to address fears about the effect that the violence and sexual perversions in the film could have on young, impressionable minds. James Ferman, the BBFC director, said that they had consulted a forensic psychologist "on the question of harm, particularly the link between sex and disability", and had a special screening for disabled people.

The BBFC, which has been criticised for awarding certificates to films such as *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Natural Born Killers*,

ers and *Kids*, also sought the advice of a QC with extensive experience in prosecuting and defending obscenity cases: "Our legal adviser took the view that, rather than sympathising or identifying with the attitudes or tastes of the characters in this film, the average viewer would in the end be repelled by them, and would reject the values and sexual proclivities displayed."

The film's distributors, Columbia TriStar, said: "We are thrilled that the BBFC has finally given *Crash* the certificate. The film has opened all over the world without any cuts." An opening date has not yet been set.

CORRECTION

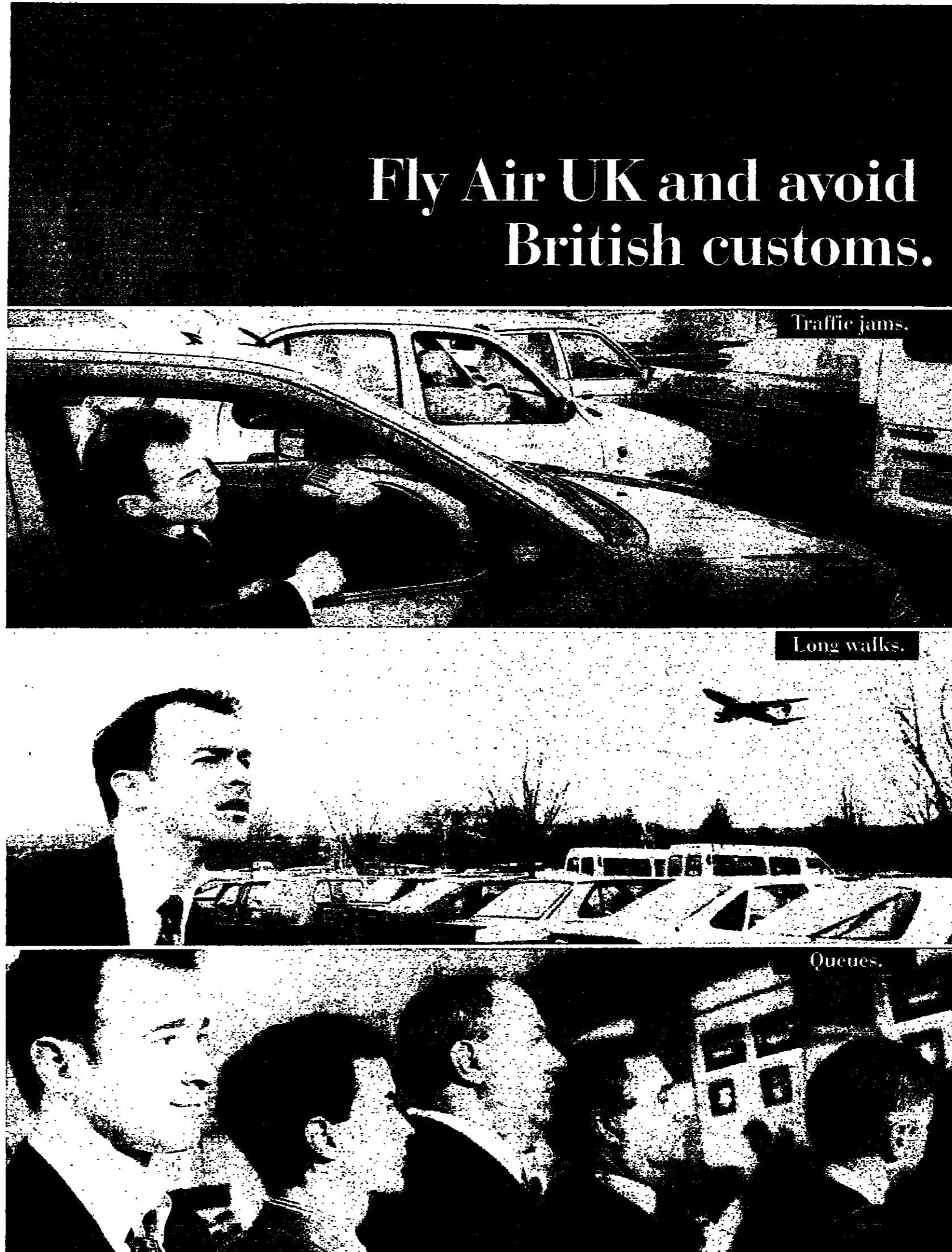
Julianna Selby, wife of Ralph Selby (obituary, yesterday) did not survive him, but died in 1994.

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NHS under fire for 'needless' Caesareans

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

WOMEN are being subjected to unnecessary Caesarean and forceps deliveries which cause them injury and waste resources, a health service watchdog says today.

Surgical and medical intervention in labour varies greatly among hospitals and is often driven by non-clinical considerations such as fear of litigation or convenience, the Audit Commission says.

An investigation of maternity services by the commission, which

included a survey of more than 2,000 mothers, found that more than 80 per cent were pleased with the care they received. Each delivery costs £1,700, a total bill for the NHS of £1.1 billion a year.

Shortcomings remain, however. The commission said that expectant women were not like other patients because they were generally in good health and often had firm views about the care they wanted. Many women felt they were not given enough information about tests they underwent during pregnancy and did not have an adequate say in

decisions about their care and the delivery.

The Audit Commission said that most NHS trusts offered too many antenatal checks to women with low-risk pregnancies who could be seen more cheaply in local clinics, which the women preferred. Of the 13 NHS trusts surveyed, two thirds provided more than the nine checks recommended for first-time mothers with low-risk pregnancies, costing an extra £10 million.

One in four of the women said they had been left alone at a time during labour when they were

worried. Trusts argue that the fluctuating workload makes it difficult to ensure enough midwives are available at all times but the commission says flexible staffing is the key.

The commission found Caesarean rates varied from 11 to 18 per cent of deliveries among the trusts studied and instrumental deliveries, such as forceps, from 5 to 13 per cent. It says that Caesareans, which have doubled in the past 20 years, have "increased to a level that concerns clinicians". Many trusts make little use of the ventouse (suction) meth-

od, which causes less pain and injury to the mother than forceps.

The commission says: "The high levels of some procedures suggest they are being carried out on a routine basis... While medical factors are a major influence on levels of intervention, non-medical factors (such as fear of litigation, professional norms and convenience) play at least as great if not a greater part."

Postnatal care received the most critical comment from the mothers. A quarter said they were dissatisfied with the length of time they were

kept in hospital, most because they felt it was too long but some because they were not ready to be discharged.

Dr Jonathan Boyce, the Audit Commission's director of health studies, said: "Once the baby is out and well, hospitals are into a consumer choice area. Mothers feel they ought to be in charge but they aren't."

The Royal College of Obstetricians denied that the high Caesarean rate was due solely to non-medical factors and said it was a "more subtle" problem related to the balance of risks.

Scientists find gene of killer disease

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE gene responsible for a rare disease that causes rapid mental decline and death in early childhood has been located by scientists at University College London.

Batten's disease came to prominence in 1993 when the parents of Rhys Daniels, then 2, threatened to sue the NHS over the closure of a unit where he had been promised a bone marrow transplant. The boy was subsequently given two transplants at another NHS centre but they failed to cure the disease.

The boy suffers from the late infant form of Batten's disease, of which there are believed to be between 30 and 40 cases in Britain at any one time. The scientists analysed blood samples from families affected by the disease and identified areas on two chromosomes where the genes responsible lie.

The next step, which is to identify precisely the genes, should make possible earlier and more reliable antenatal testing on parents known to be carriers of the disease.

Details of the discovery are given in *Human Molecular Genetics*. A member of the team, Dr Julie Sharp, believes that the findings may have wider implications for understanding mental decline. "Our research will provide further detail on the development of both the brain and the nervous system and may provide an insight into the ageing process," she said.

Rhys's father, Barry, said yesterday: "It is a huge leap forward, and now the concentration must be on finding a cure and saving the children."

Keyhole pioneer loses plea to practise

BY LIN JENKINS

A PIONEER of keyhole surgery techniques who was struck off the medical register after "repeated catastrophic failure as a surgeon" failed yesterday in his attempt to resume practising.

Nicholas Siddle, 47, from Limpsfield Chart, Surrey, sought reinstatement at a hearing of the General Medical Council, saying that he was "ashamed that standards of care to some of my patients fell grossly below the standards the public is entitled to expect". He had suffered personal problems when his premature twins died and then endured a bitter divorce but he had sought psychiatric help and learnt to be less arrogant.

The former consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at University College Hospital, London, was struck off in 1995 after a series of failures. Over 15 months he damaged the bowels, bladders, ureters and wombs of seven women. Three operations involved laparoscopic techniques at the vanguard of keyhole surgery.

After the case had been considered for over an hour, Dr Jeremy Lee-Potter, chairman of the committee, told Mr Siddle simply that he would not be restored to the register. He is free to re-apply at a later date.

Dorrell orders investigation into children's deaths

BY JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

AN INQUIRY was ordered yesterday into the heart surgery service for children run by an NHS trust after a report disclosed that one surgeon had a death rate four times higher than his colleagues.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, announced the inquiry into the Bristol Royal Infirmary after a review published yesterday criticised the "poor" surgical performance of James Wisheart.

Mr Wisheart, former medical director of the United Bristol Hospitals Trust, which includes the infirmary, announced his retirement from the NHS on Monday, 24 hours before publication of the review. He voluntarily stopped operating last December and had resigned as medical director.

The review by independent experts of 2,500 patients operated on by the surgical team at the infirmary from 1993-95, found Mr Wisheart's perfor-

mance was "significantly poorer" than his colleagues and his "operative mortality figures" were too high.

The review recommended that he should not resume operating. It disclosed that 12.2 per cent of patients who had a coronary bypass operation performed by Mr Wisheart died within 30 days compared with the 2.6 per cent average mortality rate of his colleagues.

The review came after concern over the hospital's record on child heart surgery after it was revealed that nine of thirteen babies died when undergoing controversial "switch" operations — involving the transposition of the two main arteries to the heart — and other surgical techniques to repair heart defects at the hospital between 1990 and 1995.

Hugh Ross, chief executive of the trust, said the review had given a "clear vote of confidence" in the trust's clinical audit system and in the adult cardiac service. Its performance was "in line with the published average figures for UK cardiac surgical units as a whole".

Mr Wisheart and his colleague Janardan Dhasmana are the subject of complaints under investigation by the General Medical Council.

Mr Dorrell said that the inquiry into the trust to examine the specialist cardiac surgical services for children from 1990 to 1995, would not begin until the GMC's inquiry was complete.

Wisheart: report found high mortality figures



Gareth Dixon, 12, who has cerebral palsy as a result of difficulties at his birth in Hereford County Hospital, with his mother, Elaine, yesterday after he was awarded £1.47 million damages at the High Court in Birmingham

Mental health services for young cannot cope

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

THE Department of Health was sharply criticised by MPs yesterday for failing to ensure proper help is provided to children and adolescents with mental health problems such as eating disorders.

The Select Committee on Health says that services for young people who are mentally ill are failing to meet the need. Mental health problems are

growing but services remain "patchy" and unable to cope.

It says the Health Department's ignorance of the number or geographical distribution of beds for those suffering from eating disorders is "unacceptable". At least 1 per cent of girls aged between 15 and 19 are severely affected and one in ten of the sufferers dies of starvation or suicide. "The NHS Executive cannot begin to design, still less to implement, a strategy to ensure an adequate regional distri-

bution of services if it does not collect data on current provision," it says.

The committee was concerned that

although the department supported the principle of a four-tier approach to children's mental health problems with services ranging from general advice from family doctors to specialised in-patient treatment, it had no idea what extent that had been implemented.

It says the Health Department, in its

Health of the Nation strategy, should include targets for reducing the suicide rate among young people.

However, the Health Department was congratulated for giving more prominence to issues of child and adolescent mental health in recent years and for issuing guidance to health and local authorities.

The Mental Health Foundation said that more investment in mental health services for the young was needed in order to avoid "massive problems for society in the future".

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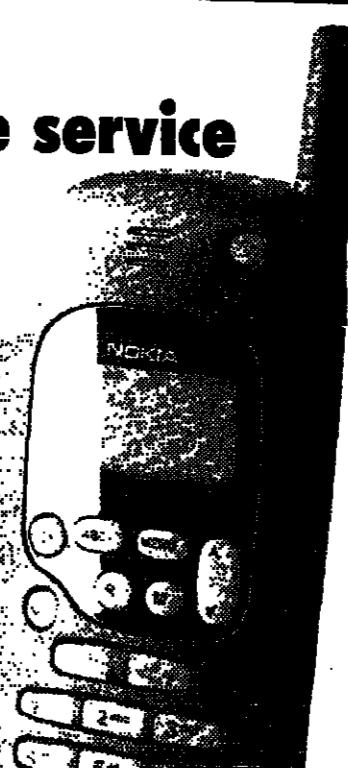
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Leaders to face the nation in series of screen tests

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE leaders of the three main political parties may not yet have agreed to take part in a televised debate, but they are making sure that no section of the television audience is ignored in a series of appearances on the BBC.

Last night the BBC confirmed that John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown will each be interviewed individually on *Panorama* by David Dimbleby in the run-up to the election. The three leaders will also appear on *Question Time*, which no serving Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition has previously agreed to do.

However, Chris Capron, who makes *Question Time* for the BBC, said that the format would be changed for the three special editions. Mr Major, Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown, who has been on the programme before, will appear individually, rather than on a panel, taking questions from the studio audience alone.

To try to attract first-time voters, the leaders have also

agreed to appear individually on Radio 1.

Peter Jay, the BBC's economics editor, will present a programme called *Debate for Chancellor*, which will bring Kenneth Clarke, Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor and Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, head to head. The three will also appear, in turn, on Channel 4's *Power and the People*, where they will face questioning from 300 members of the public.

Tony Hall, chief executive of news at the BBC, said that the BBC hoped to help people to make sense of the election. "In a general election, which will rely heavily on communicating via the media, particularly the electronic media, it is crucial that the electorate feels its trust in BBC values of impartiality and accuracy is justified. We pledge to get beyond the soundbite and the theatrics of party election management and reach the real issues that count with our audiences," he said.

BBC Radio 4's *Election Call* phone-in programme will offer up a politician a day to the electorate's questions, while Radio 5 Live, in its first election, will open several times 24 hours a day, offering listeners a chance to set the questions they want the politicians to answer.

Channel 4 has tracked down 36 of the 1,784 people born on the day Margaret Thatcher was elected Tory leader on February 11, 1979, as part of its election coverage. Now aged 22, the group, known as *Thatcher's Children*, have only ever been aware of Conservative rule and are to vote in the general election for the first time.

They will give their views on politics and the state of the nation in a series of brief interviews, replacing programme trailers on Channel 4 in the run-up to the election.

On April 24, 80 of Thatcher's Children will come together for a studio debate on the youth vote.

David Lloyd, chief commissioning editor of news and current affairs at Channel 4, said that the station hoped to eliminate the enigma that had crept into the weeks of pre-campaign posturing by politi-

cians. "We have worked hard to provide a range of programmes that allow one to follow the campaign seriously, but at the same time to be properly inquisitive and sceptical about what the politicians are telling us," he said.

The satirist Rory Bremner will be offering his view in

programmes scheduled for the Saturday before and the Saturday after the election. Sir David Frost will present *1964 And All That*, in which he compares the present contest with the 1964 general election.

Politicians and celebrities will take part in a quiz show, *Spot the Difference*, in which

they will be asked to explain the difference between the parties' policies.

Each weekday Channel 4 will broadcast a new *E-thought*: a short, provocative idea expressed through words and graphics and lasting less than a minute. They are designed to provide the infor-

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Wily political bird survives Paxo roasting

THE torrent of election television began as soon as John Major left for the Palace to ask for a dissolution on Monday morning. And little of it amounted to much more than pointless moving pictures.

The most bizarre — and expensive — images were those from the ITN helicopter as it tracked the roof of the Prime Minister's Daimler crawling through the traffic up the Mall. The most vacuous were yesterday's BBC *Breakfast News* interviews with each party leader which revealed nothing new at all.

But some journalism penetrated the bonhomie late on Monday night when Jeremy Paxman caught up with Tony Blair in the bland surroundings of a Gloucester hotel room. There was no breakthrough here, no blood on the fitted carpet, but Paxo at least asked the sort of questions that have been nagging away at the back of many minds, not least Labour supporters. Paxman wanted to know what difference there was now between Labour and the Tories. And was there anything, anything at all, which Tony Blair was willing to promise?

Political parties tend to refight the previous election and Blair is plainly anxious to show that he is not Neil Kinnock. Labour supporters have no need this time to hold their breath as they did whenever Kinnock went on TV, praying their leader would stumble to the end without inflicting too much damage on the party. But whereas Kinnock would at least attempt to hit a question for six now and then, even if he was caught out, Blair bats each ball to the earth with a thud.

Paxman was determined to ask some troublesome questions. For instance, is Tony Blair still a socialist? We'd need to start defining terms, Jeremy. Why are nine out of ten of the lowest scoring schools in the GCSE and primary league tables administered by Labour authorities? Some of these areas are the poorest in the land, Jeremy.

On the NHS, if there are no specific promises, how will we judge whether Labour has succeeded? At the moment there are people sleeping in hospital corridors, Jeremy. Will you promise then that at the end of your first term there

will not be people sleeping in corridors? It is not a promise I feel I can make, Jeremy. Blair was not flustered, but you could tell by his face that he is rarely spoken to like this.

After Paxman had established that Cedric Brown and other fat cats would not be paying more income tax after five years of Labour, the interviewer tried a trick question. Your promise about no increases in income tax, does this apply to the whole of the UK? Blair, looking perplexed, said yes. What could Jeremy be getting at? Then what about Scotland; surely you will be campaigning for a Scottish Assembly with tax-raising powers? Does that not imply more tax? No, said Blair, just because the assembly will be able to raise tax



TV WATCH
NICHOLAS WAPSHOTT

does not mean that it will actually do so. Paxman gave him the sort of look he reserves for waiters in Italian restaurants who say there is no more red wine in the cellar.

Paxman dealt another couple of blows. You are the sort of politician who is brave enough to admit to having changed your mind about things, aren't you? Blair looked pleased. But surely what you need in Downing Street is someone like Mrs Thatcher who doesn't change their mind. Blair blinked in amazement.

And he blinked even more when Paxman wondered whether *The Sun* with its bare-breasted women was the right forum for Blair to use for outlining his views on Europe. I really think there are more important things to concern ourselves with, said Blair. And, to his evident relief, they ran out of time.

Lib Dems rebuked for Union Jack proposal

BY POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Liberal Democrats dismissed a suggestion by two of their MPs yesterday that the Union Jack and the national anthem could be replaced if Scotland and Wales had their own parliaments.

The idea was contained in a pamphlet by Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, and Ray Michie, MP for Argyll and Bute, who said the "rebirth" of a federal United Kingdom could be reinforced by the adoption of a new flag and a new anthem.

They said: "For many people, the Union Flag has been devolved in modern times by its association with the Tory party — and the



Kenneth Clarke will be going *On the Record* to debate with his Labour and Liberal Democrat rivals

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Call for watchdog to replace part-time governors

BBC's amateur bosses out of date, say MPs

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

MPs demanded the abolition of the BBC's Board of Governors yesterday, labelling them as part-time, well-intentioned amateurs drawn from the great and the good, and incapable to no one.

The Heritage Select Committee called unanimously for the governors' regulatory duties to be transferred to an independent watchdog, with the power to fine the BBC if its programmes fail to meet standards of taste, decency, quality, diversity and social responsibility.

The governors' custodial function of representing the interests of licence-payers would be transferred to a board of directors, headed by an executive chairman and including qualified non-executive directors from different backgrounds.

The Heritage Committee, chaired by the Labour MP Gerald Kaufman, said that the BBC could not expect "sur-



Kaufman: Auntie needs power dressing, he said

tough, commercial environment it no longer is. It is idle to suppose that the present board, however talented they may be as individuals – or any other group of individuals appointed in the same way and from the same pool of the great and the good – can hope to compete adequately."

The 12 board members are appointed by the Queen in Council on the advice of the Government, to protect the public interest. Their terms of office usually last five years. They include Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, former head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the Rev Norman Drummond, former headmaster of the leading Edinburgh public school Loreto, Bill Jordan, general secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and Lord Gordon Lennox, a former Ambassador to Spain.

Mr Kaufman said: "It's about time that Auntie started power-dressing." The committee also recommended that the BBC should be allowed to

borrow money like any commercial organisation, to help it to survive media revolution.

The BBC has recently strengthened the regulatory powers of the governors, enabling them to act as a final court of appeal for viewers bringing complaints.

A BBC spokesman said that their role had been "consolidated and closely refined", adding that the BBC upheld more complaints about its programmes than the Independent Television Commission did on commercial broadcasts.

He added: "The BBC's prime role is as a public service broadcaster. It is not a plc and the governors' custodial role on behalf of the licence payers reflects this."

Mr Kaufman said that the BBC should be subjected to the same rigorous regulation as Channel 4, which can be fined by the ITC for transgressions of taste, decency and impartiality.

The committee advised against privatising Channel 4.

vive, prosper and expand" if its fate was in the hands of "a group of part-time people nominated for various attributes not connected with broadcasting".

In a report titled *BBC and the Future of Broadcasting* it said: "While a board of governors consisting of nominated amateurs was, in an earlier phase of its existence, an appropriate way for the BBC to be supervised, in the new,



Damon Hill with his wife, Georgie, after receiving his OBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace yesterday

DAMON HILL returned to Buckingham Palace yesterday to receive the insignia of the OBE almost 30 years after he watched his father, Graham, being invested with the same honour.

The reigning Formula 1 world champion, who was 7 when his father was

Hill's lap of honour

honoured in 1968 after winning the world championship for the second time, said: "The room seems smaller than I remember it. I'm very proud to be honoured by the Queen and by the country." He

added that the Queen was "up to speed" with her knowledge of motor racing. "We're going to Brazil next week for the next grand prix and looking forward to doing better," he said. Sir Alec Bedser, 78, the former England cricketer, was knighted yesterday.

days ago his Yamaha Arrows car failed to start in the Australian Grand Prix at Melbourne. "We're going to Brazil next week for the next grand prix and looking forward to doing better," he said. Sir Alec Bedser, 78, the former England cricketer, was knighted yesterday.

Psychosis that can be exposed by stress



DIEGO COGOLATO is starting a six-year jail sentence after repeatedly stabbing his lover, the fashion designer Ossie Clark, to death. Cogolato also battered Mr Clark around the head with a stone, a terracotta flower vase and a stave. The attack on Mr Clark occurred during a period when Cogolato was said to have been suffering from a transient psychotic episode.

Cogolato, 29, seemed to have led a purposeless life since completing his military service in Italy. He regularly took illicit drugs and excessive amounts of alcohol. The attack on Mr Clark was, according to Cogolato, ordered by God as he, Cogolato, was the Messiah sent to rid the world of Satan – his former lover.

Cogolato was originally described as suffering from schizophrenia. The history of delusions, the hearing of God's voice and the patient's acquiescence in the violent solution that he perceived to be God's will, are depressingly familiar to most doctors. Later this initial diagnosis was modified and he was said to be suffering from an acute psychotic episode, sometimes referred to as a brief reactive psychosis. The features of transient psychotic episodes are that the symptoms should be of sudden origin, last for at least a few hours, and that the patient's personality should return to its pre-episode state within a month. During the Second World War, soldiers who displayed these symptoms were said to suffer from "three-day schizophrenia".

Patients who suffer a brief reactive psychosis often have pre-existing mental disease, or a personality disorder, which is exacerbated by any of the stresses that induce emotional turmoil. Unhappiness after the end of an affair or a divorce is a common precipitating cause of a reactive psychosis but other patients react equally badly to excessive workload or illness.

With treatment the majority of patients will overcome any psychotic symptoms should they recur, and there is increasing evidence that early anti-psychotic treatment can prevent later trouble.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

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Zaireans welcome rebel liberators in captured city

THEY are wearing white strips of cloth around their heads in this jungle city which last weekend became the greatest prize to fall to rebels advancing across Zaire. The people say they will not remove the bandanas until the arrival of the rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, who is expected in coming days.

"The headbands symbolise victory and liberation," Paul Marcel Volakonga, a librarian at the local university, said. "The fighters who freed us from dictatorship are not rebels, they are liberators."

Apart from a few looted shops in the town centre, there is little evidence of the fall of Kisangani to Mr Kabila's Democratic Alliance of Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire. The Zairean Army and its mercenary backers had been expected to resist the rebel assault but instead they fled in panic.

The bulk of the army crossed the Zaire River in boats, residents said. Hundreds of French, Serb, Moroccan and other mercenaries, who had been drafted in to protect the city, either escaped by aircraft westwards or disappeared into the jungle with the Zairean soldiers.

At the military airport an aircraft, its tyres shot out, bears testimony to a gun battle between the retreating mercenaries and soldiers desperate to prevent their allies flight by air.

"Now all is calm," Mr Volakonga said. "The curfew is over and we can move about the city again. The liberators behave well, they don't beat us as if we were snakes which is what the army did. The mercenaries were cruel, they would just shoot people in cold blood. Their motto was 'No pity'."

Residents said they were waiting for the establishment of a new administration in

Kisangani residents are urging the fighters who freed them from dictatorship to push on for the capital, Kinshasa, reports David Orr

Kisangani, Zaire's third largest city and the farthest point west of the rebels' advance. A decaying city in the depths of the equatorial rainforest, Kisangani has, in this virtually roadless country, a symbolic significance: perched on the banks of the mighty Zaire River, it stands as the gateway to more than 1,000 miles of navigable waterway leading to Kinshasa, the capital.

Kisangani was the redoubt chosen by the Government to launch its counter-offensive

been hospitalised in France came within days of the fall of Kisangani. Speculation is growing that the President will die in exile and that his corrupt regime will self-destruct in the coming days or weeks.

"It would be good if Mobutu dies," Evariste Lombe, a Kisangani medical student, said. "But it would be even better if he lives to witness his own downfall."

The rebels now control a fifth of this sprawling Central African nation. Residents of Kisangani hope that the rebel force will press its military advantage and take all of the country rather than enter into peace talks that are being initiated by the international community.

The rebels are strict but they seem fair," Jerry Selenke, an American missionary whose house was looted by the ill-disciplined army before they fled, said. "There's law and order, it's much easier working with the new guys than with the old regime."

Yesterday, Joseph Kabila, son of the rebel movement's leader and regional commander, gave the residents in Kisangani 48 hours to return all goods looted from abandoned aid stores and depots. More than 400 tonnes of material — food, medicine and electrical equipment — was looted by civilians and the retreating army. If they do not comply, they will be severely punished. A large amount of the stolen goods have already been returned.

and beat back the rebels. Zairean Army commanders boasted it could not be taken. Its fall, diplomats in the region said, will send shockwaves all the way to Kinshasa, where the population grows daily more fearful of turmoil. There have been rumours in the capital of an imminent coup by the military, which has been humiliated in the five months since the rebel insurgency began.

The collapse of the country is matched by the decline in the health of President Mobutu. News that the cancer-stricken leader has again

Defector flies to Philippines

BY JAMES PRINGLE

THE most senior official to defect from North Korea, Hwang Jang Yop, arrived yesterday in the Philippines from Beijing, where he had sought asylum five weeks ago, fearing he was about to be purged by political enemies. He left the South Korean consulate, where he had been sheltering, in a ruse involving three vans making off in different directions to thwart any assassination attempt. Earlier in the saga, North Korean agents had surrounded the consulate and were assumed still to have at least some operatives in the area.

The Chinese were furious when the South Koreans broke the news in a high-profile manner and Beijing tried to give as little prominence to the incident as possible so as not to embarrass North Korea, an old ally and comrade-in-arms during the Korean War.

Officials in the Philippines said that Mr Hwang flew to Clark airbase north of Manila, and the South Korean Foreign Ministry said he was "safe under South Korean control, in a foreign country". China said that the affair had been resolved through negotiations. Envoy believe he will fly on to Seoul after a decent interval, agreed at Beijing's behest so as to allow Pyongang to save some face.



Orthodox Jews on the windswept Har Homa hillside as surveyors move in

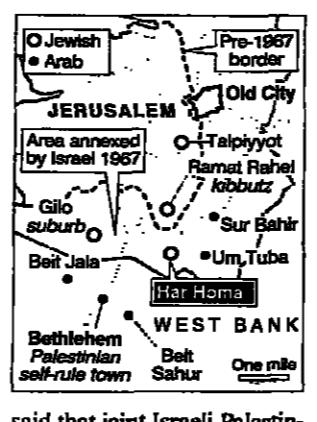
Israeli guns guard start of work on settlement

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

HAMAS, the Islamic Resistance Movement, last night called for a new Palestinian intifada after Israel defied world opinion and dispatched bulldozers in a military-style operation to start work on Har Homa, a big settlement in annexed east Jerusalem.

Israeli forces were put on an emergency footing after the Government of Binyamin Netanyahu was told by security chiefs that Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, had given the go-ahead for violent protests among the 2.2 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "We have received very hard intelligence that the Palestinian Authority has prepared the ground for violence," the Prime Minister said. "I demand they reverse these decisions immediately. The Palestinian side must choose, do we want terror or do we want peace?"

As hundreds of troops in full battle gear guarded the earth-moving equipment and police scuffled with Israeli Arabs at the site, declared a "closed military zone". Israeli radio



national police chief, said that police were preparing "for the ground to get hot", with officials concerned that Friday's Muslim prayers could spark an explosion.

Faisal Hussein, Mr Arafat's chief Jerusalem representative, was one of those Palestinians whose rain-sodden tent protest at the contested pine-covered hillside was wrongfooted as work began a safe distance away. He said at the camp site opposite Har Homa — which the Arabs call Jabal Abu Ghneim — that the groundbreaking, ordered by Mr Netanyahu after a 45-minute session with his military chief, left the Palestinians only one option — "to go down to the streets". The Hamas call for a "continuous intifada" was issued from Jordan by Ibrahim Ghoshe, its spokesman.

Outside Bethlehem the first black smoke of burning tyres, so familiar during the 1987-1993 uprising, could be seen. Palestinian teenagers taunted soldiers.

Hundreds of Israeli police went east Jerusalem in anticipation of rioting and all police and army leave was cancelled. Assaf Hefetz, the

chief of police, said that joint Israeli-Palestinian security patrols had been halted. As the peace process teetered close to collapse amid fears of widespread violence, the radio said Israel had also declared the self-rule towns of Bethlehem and Hebron off bounds to Israelis.

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Outside Bethlehem the first black smoke of burning tyres, so familiar during the 1987-1993 uprising, could be seen. Palestinian teenagers taunted

British 'advisers' detained in Papua

BY NOEL PASCOE
IN PORT MORESBY
AND MICHAEL EVANS,
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH former special forces soldiers were among 10 mercenaries still being held in Papua New Guinea yesterday, despite an order by Sir Julius Chan, the Prime Minister, to release them.

The former British and South African soldiers were caught up in a stand-off between Sir Julius, who hired the foreign military "advisers" to train the country's army to put down a nine-year-old secessionist guerrilla war, and Brigadier-General Jerry Singirok, the Defence Force commander, who has been sacked for trying to expel the mercenaries.

The Foreign Office said it had reported that two or three Britons were among those detained. However, the Foreign Office has criticised the Papua New Guinea Government for using mercenaries to train its military. A Foreign Office source said the secessionist dispute with the Bougainville Revolutionary Army rebels could not be resolved through military action.

The mercenaries are being held at a remote camp near the northern coastal town of Wewak. The foreign "advisers" had been hired after an agreement signed on January 31 between Papua New Guinea and Sandline International, a London-based security consultancy company. Sandline, whose chief executive is Lieutenant-Colonel Tim Spicer, formerly of the Scots Guards, said yesterday that General Singirok had been involved in the deal.

The general's address to the nation, which condemned the use of foreign military advisers and called for the resignation of Sir Julius, contradicted his earlier position. Sandline said, in a statement, the company said: "We are astounded that he would unilaterally seek to destabilise the democratically elected Government with his wildly inaccurate, misleading and untrue claims."

Sandline said General Singirok had consistently supported the contractual terms of the deal. The firm added that it had contacted Sir Julius and had confirmed that its advisory team would remain in the country "as long as we are required".

Most of the mercenaries have been provided by Executive Outcomes, a firm based in Pretoria, South Africa, subcontracted by Sandline.

Sir Julius said yesterday that he was in "absolute control" of the situation and accused Brigadier-General Singirok of "gross insubordination bordering on treason". He could face arrest, he said.

WORLD SUMMARY

German troops in race row

BONN: Ten German soldiers, earmarked for Bosnia service, were arrested yesterday after attacking an Italian and two Turks with baseball bats and knives (Roger Boyes writes). They were drunk, but serious enough to pull on masks and shout racist slogans.

The assault embarrassed an army command basking in media praise. Having helped to move 103 people out of Albania, its soldiers had been dubbed "German heroes" for the first time in years.

Separatist's news break

VENICE: Police started an investigation into how state television's main news broadcast was interrupted by a man urging people in northeast Italy to overthrow the Government. The separatist managed to block out the sound on RAI Uno's evening news bulletin in the Veneto region twice in about 20 minutes and broadcast his own recorded message. (Reuters)

Poverty wage for UN maid

GENEVA: The most senior UN human rights official paid his Peruvian maid a poverty level wage for two-and-a-half years, (Peter Capella writes). José Alvaldo Lasso, who has resigned as High Commissioner for Human Rights to become Ecuador's Foreign Minister, paid the maid \$800 (£506) a month for working 11½ hours a day on a six-day week.

Cuban drugs general freed

MIAAMI: Cuba has released from prison a former general jailed for 30 years in 1989 for his part in a drug trafficking scandal that shocked Cuba's Communist Party (David Adams writes). Relatives said Brigadier General Patricio de la Guardia, 58, was told he was free soon after hearing of the death of his father, 97.

Amnesty drive on refugees

LONDON: There are 15 million refugees in the world and another 20 million displaced persons forced from their homes but within their national borders. Amnesty International said as it launched a global campaign, condemning the "callous disregard" of governments. (AFP)

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Filipinos get £240m British bridges

FROM ABBY TAN
IN MANILA

BRITAIN yesterday presented the Philippines with a £240 million project for a network of bridges that promises to alter dramatically the lives of millions of rural Filipinos.

The scheme, involving 218 bridges to be constructed in 70 provinces by the British company Mabey and Johnson, was launched by President Ramos. He was presented with the project by Adrian Thorpe, the British Ambassador, and Mabey and Johnson officials at the presidential palace, where they also wished the Filipino leader a happy 69th birthday.

The bridges, which will be built at the rate of one a day, are designed to withstand natural disasters and to require little maintenance. The Philippines suffers from typhoons, floods and volcanic eruptions.

Mr Ramos said the bridges will spur agricultural production, commercial and tourism activities and directly benefit nearly ten million Filipinos.

The British Government is paying for the project through a grant and soft loan package. Mr Ramos said that the aide had "freed much-needed government resources for other pressing programmes", like upgrading teachers' skills, small-scale enterprises and rural health.

The bridges were christened FVR after the President's initials because, as Mr Thorpe explained, "they are fast to erect, versatile and value-for-money, robust and reliable".

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A woman simply can't win in court

Why Tania Clayton had to be a victim to prove her case

Every time a woman wins a sexual harassment case, the air grows thick with gibes of wimp and whinger — and that's just from the female commentators.

I think it would be difficult for anyone, however, even the most hardboiled of vinegar-lipped observers, to put up a convincing argument against Tania Clayton, the fire officer who has just won (in an out-of-court settlement) £200,000 to compensate her for five years of bullying and victimisation at work. Her colleagues were undoubtedly wrong to behave as they did; she was undoubtedly right to try to do something about it.

And yet... and yet... five years? One is not supposed to ask of battered wives why



Nigella Lawson

they stay to be battered — as if the question itself blames them for the battering. But why so? Anyway, it is not my intention to hold Mrs Clayton accountable for the behavior of her bully-boy colleagues, but I still cannot imagine what made her put up with it for so long.

I understand that the need to earn a living makes keeping the job you have the dominant imperative. Even more, I assume that, as with women who are attacked at home, those who are bullied at work receive such a blow to their self-esteem that they don't have the confidence to make a stand.

Unfortunately, though, whatever the psychological explanation, the fact that she did put up with it for so long means that the intimidation tactics of her colleagues did, in effect, work: if they victimised her, it is now indeed the case that her status, in the eyes of the world, is that of victim. In order to win, she has had to prove that. How demoralising to have to win justice at the cost of your reputation.

I can see, though, that it would have been more of a blow if Mrs Clayton hadn't won; then it would have seemed as if the taunts were OK.

I know that it is often just a cheap trick to cite the American way as evidence

of a world gone seriously awry in matters of reason and comportment, but it is hard to see, by comparison, what Paula Jones hopes to gain (except for a great deal of money) by suing Bill Clinton for sexual harassment.

This is a very different case: Jones claims Clinton made improper advances in a hotel room in 1991, as a consequence of which she was left feeling "mentally raped". While there are people being physically raped I am afraid I haven't got much time for such self-pitying, attention-seeking whining.

What is more, the self-styled victim is now claiming that all she wants is to have her reputation restored. This is an odd one. If her allegations of assault are genuine — or if even if they are just upheld — then what loss of reputation can she deem there to be? And if they are unfounded and the grievances she chose to publicise by doing the rounds of the chat-show circuit are groundless, then any damage to her reputation is of her own doing.

Not that things are any clearer over here concerning such matters. The proliferation of so-called date-rape cases is intensely worrying. Rape is an awful offence, and I don't see how sex with a fellow student you don't much like comes into that category. There is still the problem of reputation: I understand how it could ruin an innocent man's life if he is accused of rape. Despite a court's verdict, the idea that there's no smoke without fire prevails. We all know that.

I know there is a very good argument against allowing the defendant the same anonymity guaranteed to the plaintiff in such cases. I do see that it goes against the principles of democratic justice to have secret, closed trials. If you start with rape cases, why not murder? Before you know it, we're living in Idi Amin-land.

But I can't help thinking that if many more weak, unconvincing so-called date-rape cases are brought, it will be not only innocent men who lose their reputation, but even more innocent women, too. For not only will the real victims of rape be increasingly treated with suspicion and contempt, but so will women in general.

The law deems someone's reputation to have been harmed if the offence is such as to "expose him [our legal system] to hatred, ridicule or contempt, cause him to be shunned or avoided, or lowered in the estimation of right-thinking people". How long will it be before defendants in rape cases which are not upheld start suing for loss of reputation?

Tim Parks: "Never does the world seem so freshly painted, so brightly enamelled, so new, for heaven's sake, as after the best sex. But, alas, it may be full of new complications, too."

When temptation strikes

MEN ONLY

The road to erotic passion can end in confusion, says Tim Parks

If Brahma is a more endearing creator than Jehovah, it is because he wasn't pleased with what he had made. He found the world dull and dusty. Death was the answer, suggested Siva. Living for ever, people were bored. A time limit would galvanise, give dignity. But that case way of replacing the population would have to be found.

Brahma brought together a few trusted fellows and explained what was required. The pleasure took them by surprise. What was that for? To put a fresh shine on the world, they were told. Otherwise it might get dusty again.

I'm always taken aback when people talk about the eroticism of food and drink, of sunbathing and massage. This is mere sensuality. Or avoiding the issue. No experience even remotely compares with true Eros, with long and lavish love-making. It is understandable that people should imagine it was tacked on to creation afterwards, so extravagant is the pleasure it brings, so far beyond what is necessary. Never does the world seem so freshly painted, so brightly enamelled, for heaven's sake, as after the best sex. But, alas, it may be full of new complications, too. A lesser authority than Brahma would have issued a health warning.

Over billiards and beer, a friend is explaining why he is leaving his wife and two children. He's playing with unusual speed and precision. His eyes are brighter than the beer could account for. And the girl is 23, he explains. French. So intelligent. "Intelligently pert breasts?" I inquire. "Perceptively warm thighs?"

He laughs. He is deliriously proud, confused, unhappy. "I feel I was never really in love with my wife," he says. Eroticism paints out the past. In this sense it is the most potent myth-making and myth-destroying power we have. That how first encounters are told and retold, cherished and savoured over and over again. How solid and irreplaceable they begin to seem. I did this, you said that. When your hand first... When your mouth... Beneath the superstructure of domestic economy, in-laws, even children, it is on this hedrock that marriage resists. But only one? Is it never to happen again? Suddenly solid ground is quicksand.

Societies, religions can be defined in the way they deal with this conundrum. Polygamy, monogamy with repression, monogamy with affairs, monogamy with prostitutes, serial monogamy. Not to mention individual solutions of great ingenuity, or desperation: Victor Hugo with the door knocked through the wall of his office, to let in a girl each afternoon. Auden's flair for finding call-boys in every town. Picasso, who simply refused when wife and mistress demanded that he choose between them.

But perhaps the thing to remember when you wake up with a life full of fresh paint and tortuous complications is that eroticism wasn't invented for you, nor merely for the survival of the species, perhaps, but for a divinity's entertainment. Nothing gener-

ates so many opportunities for irritation and *Schadenfreude* as eroticism. Which is why it lies at the centre of so much narrative. How the gods thronged the balconies of heaven to see the consequences of Helen's betrayal! On the borders between mythology and history, that wily survivor Odysseus was the

first who learnt to trick the gods. And perhaps his smartest trick of all was that of lashing himself to the mast before the Sirens came within earshot. There are those, of course, who are happy to stand at the railings, even scan the horizon. Otherwise choose your mast, find the ropes that suit you: sport, workaholism,

celibacy with prayerbook and bell...

But the kindest and toughest ropes of all are probably to be found in some suburban semi-detached with rowdy children and a woman who never allows the dust to settle for too long.

• Tim Parks's novel *Europa* is published by Secker & Warburg on April 14, £9.99.

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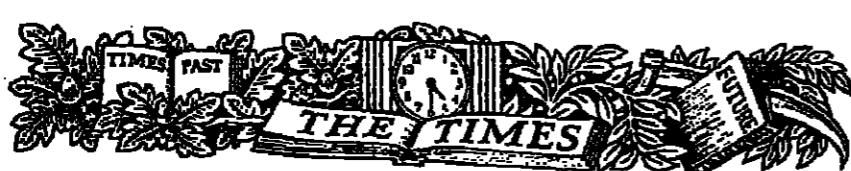
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PUBLISH OR BE DAMNED

Sleaze cannot be kept under wraps until after the election

The calling of the election has seen attention, naturally, move from Westminster to the hustings. But important judgments at the polls depend on business which Parliament seems fated not to finish. In preparation for the campaign, the Commons is busying itself with tying up loose ends. There is, one which has been left hanging, like a suspended noose. The report by Sir Gordon Downey into the "cash for questions" allegations against Neil Hamilton and others will not, now, be published until after the election. It is insupportable that an investigation as important as this should, after the months lavished on it, spend the election under lock and key. When democracy needs them most, watchdogs should not be kept in quarantine.

No one is well-served by the suppression of this report. The electors of Tatton will be invited to pass their own sentence on Mr Hamilton at the polls, without having heard the evidence which might either condemn or exonerate him. The Tories have claimed collectively, as loudly as Mr Hamilton has individually, that they have been unfairly tarnished by sleaze. The one document which might, however, restore some confidence will languish unread for the duration of the campaign.

The Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes pointed out yesterday that it is John Major's dissolution timing which apparently precludes publication. Voters may believe that the Prime Minister could have been motivated by a desire to suppress the report. If so, far from limiting the damage that sleaze might cause, he has only given voters another reason to suspect sharp practice. Mr Major surely cannot want this election to proceed with his candidates awaiting Sir Gordon's judgment.

When the inquiry was set up, in defiance of opposition calls for a full tribunal, Mr

Major said he did not want this matter to be sent into "the long grass". That, however, is where matters now rest and the Prime Minister cannot hide behind parliamentary procedure. Sir Gordon, working a four-day week, has hardly been the Stakhanov of the committee corridors but the primary fault is not his, but the Government's. Lord Nolan may investigate matters after the election but the Tories should want to present the voters with a clean bill of health, not a post-mortem. If the Conservatives want to preserve their reputation they should publish, or be damned.

Although the electorate is short-changed by the non-appearance of the report, the most conspicuous victim is Mr Hamilton. It is difficult to inspire sympathy for the former minister, but in this matter he deserves his portion. The uncontested evidence of his stay at the Paris Ritz at Mohamed Al Fayed's expense and his relationship with the lobbyist Ian Greer raise worrying questions about his judgement. They are not, however, central to the charge against him of corruption. The allegation that Mr Hamilton accepted cash for asking parliamentary questions is bitterly contested.

The main evidence against Mr Hamilton on this charge has, so far, come from Mr Al Fayed and his employees. Thirteen days ago his extraordinary allegation that the Home Secretary had accepted a £1.5 million bribe was "authoritatively" dismissed by Sir Gordon, who found no evidence to support Mr Al Fayed's claims. Sir Gordon is not the first investigator to find Mr Al Fayed's evidence less than reliable. If the electors of Tatton want to know whether or not their Member is a "liar and a cheat" before deciding to vote for him, they cannot, on past record, take Mr Al Fayed's word for it. They need Sir Gordon's.

LAKE IN THE DRINK

Fundraising scandal claims its first political victim

With the withdrawal of Anthony Lake as his prospective CIA Director, President Clinton has suffered the first outright political defeat of his second term. There has been much protest and anger from the Oval Office about the allegedly unfair treatment of its nominee. A poisonous atmosphere of pure partisanship has been blamed for the demise of a clearly qualified candidate. The confirmation process has been condemned as an impediment to the recruitment of worthy citizens to serve in public office.

Much of this is disingenuous. Mr Lake was always a controversial choice to head the Central Intelligence Agency. His background is in the academic world rather than the defence community from which such figures have usually been drawn. He had, at best, a modest record as National Security Adviser in Mr Clinton's first term. During that tenure he had concealed from Congress his knowledge that Iran was providing military assistance to Bosnia's Muslims.

The President moved him from that post as part of a wide-ranging restructuring of his foreign policy team and offered him the CIA position as an alternative. The previous incumbent, John Deutch, had been dropped for admitting publicly that Saddam Hussein had been strengthened by the fratricide among Iraqi Kurds last year. From the moment his name was floated, the Senate intelligence committee made it quite clear that he would be subject to intense scrutiny.

The same Republican Senate that has been accused of vindictiveness accepted virtually all Mr Clinton's other major appointments without dispute. The role of CIA Director has always been treated with exceptional sensitivity. Until the early 1970s Congress had minimal influence over intelligence activities. Since then, Capitol Hill has demanded independent figures whom it

trusted. In 1977, a Democratic Senate informed President Carter that his choice, Theodore Sorenson, would not do. In 1991, President Bush's preference, Robert Gates, barely survived a Senate vote. Mr Lake was at least as contentious this time.

His fate was sealed when he became embroiled in the assorted scandals that have haunted Mr Clinton since his re-election. The FBI had informed National Security Council staff last June that associates of the Chinese Government were attempting to steer money towards the Democratic Party - a move that was both obviously undesirable and patently illegal. This information apparently never reached Mr Lake nor was it sent to the White House.

On Monday it emerged that Mr Lake had also not been informed that his office had failed to prevent Roger Tamraz, an oil financier, from meeting Mr Clinton. That liaison had been promoted by the chairman of the Democratic National Committee who believed he could solicit a large donation if the President would co-operate. The fact that their proposed sponsor has been wanted in Lebanon on embezzlement charges for a decade seemingly bothered neither party nor President.

The current charged environment in Washington certainly contributed to Mr Lake's downfall but did not exclusively create it. Politics in the American capital has largely ground to a halt while Republicans are extracting further documentation on how the Clinton-Gore campaign was financed. Those efforts will continue until the Justice Department selects an independent counsel to investigate the affair. It is now as much in Mr Clinton's interests as his opponents that such an appointment be made. In either case Mr Lake is unlikely to be the last casualty of the China connection.

CULTURAL CAMPAIGNS

The British arts festival season is democracy in action

Do not despair. For the next six weeks there is life other than the general election. May 1 is polling day. But it is also the first day of the Glasgow Mayfest, which will continue all month to celebrate all the arts throughout the city. And in it there will be world premieres, famous companies from abroad, drama and controversy, probably about Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's opera *Resurrection*.

And Glasgow is just one of the season of British arts festivals that will run from now until October. Today our Arts Pages publish a selection of 50 of the brightest and best of them. From Easter onwards not a day will pass without festivals in some remote corner, country town or crowded inner city of the land. They range from the blockbusters, such as Edinburgh and Cheltenham, Bath and Brighton, to the specialist, such as Aldeburgh for contemporary music, and York for the early kind. Notting Hill's Carnival has become as famous as those of Rio or New Orleans. There is rock and pop in all their varieties at Glastonbury, Phoenix and Reading, theatre at Chichester, Shakespeare at Arundel, opera at Glyndebourne and the Eisteddfod at Llangollen.

Some festivals are very old. This summer brings the 103rd season of the BBC's Promenade Concerts and the 50th of the Edinburgh Festival. The Hereford Three Choirs is Europe's oldest choral festival. Some festivals are new. This is the second year of the Docklands Festival, and the first

of the Daphne Du Maurier Festival in Cornwall. Depending on how the count is taken, there are now about 500 festivals during the British season. This pull does not include the thousands of Muggletonian pageants and pig-roastings that last for only a weekend. The number grows every year. Often the standard is extremely high, ambitious and eclectic, bringing top-quality culture in all its international forms to those who live remote from the big cities.

The connection between politics and the arts is closer than is often recognised. Festivals make opportunity, chance and ownership of lasting goods available to all. They can turn the cultural have-nots into cultural haves. It is no accident that the first democracy was founded by the society that invented festivals. Those great celebrations of the first tragedy and comedy were a cement of civil society and a chance to display the genius, as well as the might and wealth, of Athens to the world. The British theatre grew out of the medieval mystery plays. These will be played again at festivals this year, as they have been for more than seven centuries.

Life without the arts makes a barren and uncivil society. The great drama of the general election will occupy centre stage in Britain for the next six weeks. But at the same time the festivals of Britain will show that there is life after politics, connected and commenting on it.

Counter-claims on tax and spending

From the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Sir, William Waldegrave deceives himself ("Labour's liaison with Leviathan", March 13). He says that Conservatives distrust Leviathan. This is a Government which has centralised power on an unparalleled level and which spends exactly the same share of national income now as it inherited in 1978-79.

He misleads himself elsewhere as well. The UK growth rate over the last 18 years is less than that achieved by the last Labour Government and is less than the European Union average.

His claims that public sector borrowing is under control don't stand up. By the end of the current financial year the Government will have had to borrow £66 billion more than they promised in 1992. The national debt has doubled since John Major became Prime Minister.

And his claims about our pledged spending commitments don't bear examination either. Indeed, these claims, frequently repeated, are widely discredited. Mr Waldegrave's problem is that, increasingly, no one believes a word this Government says. They sought the trust of the British people in 1992. They have now lost that trust completely.

Yours sincerely,
ALISTAIR DARLING,
Shadow Chief Secretary
to the Treasury,
House of Commons.
March 14.

From Mr Paul Ashton

Sir, Lord Healey (letter, March 15) may well be right in claiming that the average family is paying more in taxes as a proportion of income today than in 1978-79 when he was Chancellor; but the tone of his letter suggests that a Labour government would have done better. We may still need some convincing of this.

For example, his party has consistently voted against income tax rate cuts. If the 1978-79 tax rates were still in force now, along with indexed thresholds, the proportion of average earnings taken in tax and national insurance contributions would, I calculate, be almost five percentage points higher today (30.6 per cent against 25.9 per cent).

Further, for Labour to have done better than the present Government on spending as a proportion of GDP, it would have to be spending less than the Government is now doing. I would hazard to guess that not many of us think that likely.

Labour has come a long way in moderating its tax-and-spend policies, but it is a bit much to ask us to believe that taxes and spending would be as low or lower now had Lord Healey's party been in power since 1979.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL ASHTON,
37 Benbow Avenue, Langney Point,
Eastbourne, East Sussex.
March 15.

From Sir David Mitchell,
MP for Hampshire North West
(Conservative)

Sir, Before the last general election John Major made it abundantly clear that he had no intention of increasing taxes. The Opposition attacks him for 22 increases (you can just get to that figure but it takes a bit of mental agility). However, in doing so Labour raises the central question of what it would have done had it been in government in the circumstances in which John Major's Chancellor found himself.

The recession continued longer and deeper than expected. Spending on unemployment and associated benefits rose, government receipts from VAT and corporation tax fell. The Government had either to increase tax or print the money to cover the shortfall.

Is Labour's hidden message that it would have, and would in future, print and return to soaring inflation, as it did before?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID MITCHELL,
House of Commons.
March 17.

Local taxation

From Councillor Sir Jeremy Beecham

Sir, Sir Ronald Watson (letter, March 7) appears to criticise my view that it is necessary for there to be a shift in the proportion of local authority income from the amount raised centrally to that raised locally.

Yet local accountability is impossible without a more explicit connection between local expenditure and local taxation. Sir Ron himself has in the past recognised this in his calls for capping to be ended in order, as he has put it, that local councils should not be allowed to claim either that they are spending at a level permitted by central government or that their inability to provide adequate local services is inhibited by central government.

He also omits to mention that the present Government's own plans foreseen a decrease in the proportion of central funding.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY BEECHAM
(Chairman, Association of
Metropolitan Authorities)
35 Great Smith Street, SW1.
March 11.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Dorrell's plans for long-term residential care for elderly

From the Executive Director of ARPOS0

Sir, Stephen Dorrell presents his scheme for long-term residential care of the elderly as a major policy decision affecting everyone (report, March 13). In fact, it will do no more than assist a tiny proportion of those who must sell their homes in order to pay for such care. Even they will achieve this only at very considerable cost and with no guarantee that, in the end, the funds will be allocated as they desire.

In June 1996 the National Association of Pension Funds, giving evidence to the Commons Health Committee stated that a couple aged 65 would have to pay £315 per month to cover an average-size house. Although figures now being quoted may be slightly lower than this, such estimates are entirely beyond the reach of most people. Indeed PPP Lifetime has stated that its policyholders typically have assets of more than £20,000.

What is of equal concern is the manner in which funds are eventually made available. It must be proved that the person can no longer perform certain "activities for daily living", with criteria being arbitrarily fixed by the insurance company. In many cases payments will then be made directly to the care provider.

It is difficult to avoid the feeling that policy of this kind is mere tokenism, diverting attention from the real problem, which is the growing neglect of the 95 per cent of dependent people who are cared for in their own homes and for whom essential services are rapidly disappearing.

Yours faithfully,
DONALD W. STEELE,
Executive Director,
ARPOS0 (Association of
Retired and Persons Over 50),
Greenoak House,
Francis Street, SW1.
March 13.

From the Chief Executive of Scope

Sir, Mr Dorrell's White Paper presents a dramatic shift in policy, placing responsibility for care needs onto the individual disabled person and their family. If the Government contracts out care provision, not only of residential services but also the vast amount of care services provided to people in their own homes, disabled people could be left without choice and without a safety net.

Yet again we see the rights and needs of disabled people sidelined in favour of penny-pinching policies. Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BREWSTER,
Chief Executive,
Scope (formerly The Spastics Society),
12 Park Crescent, W1.
March 14.

simple to administer and fair to everyone; it would be vastly superior to the Government's proposals involving insurance companies, the main beneficiary of which would, I suspect, be those companies and not the citizens of this country.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT WATERHOUSE,
5 Heatherbank, Chislehurst, Kent.
March 12.

From Ms Tessa Harding

Sir, Professor Alan Williams of the Centre for Health Economics at the University of York suggests that discriminating against the elderly is an "appropriate" way of rationing scarce health resources (report, March 14). Is he seriously saying that this country is so poor that it cannot afford health care for its older people?

If we spend a lower proportion of our GDP (under 7 per cent) on health than nearly all OECD countries, it is because we choose to, not out of economic necessity.

Certainly we could and should be doing more to help older people retain their independence. We could be making sure people's homes are warm and well insulated; that public transport is convenient and accessible; that corner shops and village post offices stay open; that there is enough good primary and other domiciliary care available when people need it. To take these "unglamorous measures" would make both human and economic sense and help people remain independent, as they wish. But we are not doing that either at present.

It is not a question of choosing between those sensible measures and high-quality healthcare; we need both. Once we start making judgments about the value of people's lives on the basis that they belong to a particular group or class in society, we are on a very slippery slope. Discrimination on grounds of age is no more acceptable than discrimination on grounds of race, gender or class.

Yours etc,
TESSA HARDING
(Head of Planning and Development),
Help the Aged,
St James's Walk,
Clerkenwell Green, EC1.
March 17.

France and Africa

From the Ambassador of France

Sir, I was very surprised to read in your editorial of March 12, "Back to Fashoda", some particularly harsh comments on French policy vis-à-vis central Africa.

France is not way suffering from "Fashoda syndrome" and, in view of the rivalry which you allege exists between France and Britain in Africa, I would hazard to guess that not many of us think that likely.

Labour has come a long way in moderating its tax-and-spend policies, but it is a bit much to ask us to believe that taxes and spending would be as low or lower now had Lord Healey's party been in power since 1979.

As regard the crisis in Zaire's South Kivu province, France is working in close co-operation with the United States and the United Kingdom and shares with them the desire to see the rapid and full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1097, unanimously adopted on February 18.

It is against this background and because the situation of the hundreds of thousands of Kivu refugees has become tragic that on March 10 the President of the Republic issued a solemn appeal to the international community immediately to stop the fighting and provide the humanitarian aid which is most urgently needed.

Our policy is also directed towards guaranteeing Zaire's sovereignty and territorial integrity, ending foreign interference and promoting dialogue in the run-up to Zairean elections and the organisation of an international conference bringing together the countries of the Great Lakes region in order to achieve a lasting solution to the current crisis. I note that the peace plan of the United Nations Secretary-General's special representative and the OAU has endorsed these objectives.

Finally, I am especially shocked to read the allegation that France "armed and backed the Hutu killers in Rwanda". Right from the onset of the Rwandan crisis, we have been striving, harder than any other country, to promote a political solution and mobilise the international community in order to prevent ethnic clashes. Indeed, France stopped sending any military hardware to Rwanda on April 8, 1994 - ie, before the United Nations imposed an embargo on arms supplies to that country on May 17, 1994. Furthermore, France was the first to use the term "genocide" to describe the events which took place in Rwanda after April 6, 1994, and actively supported the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal to try those responsible for those crimes.

France's action in the whole of Africa is not in any way prompted by racism, but by the firm belief that only by acting as one can the international community effectively help Africa cope with the immense challenges confronting it.

Yours faithfully,
JEAN GUEGUINOU,
Embassy of France,
33 Knightsbridge, SW1.
March 13.

From Mr Charles Dodd

Sir, Mr Nathan Grigg's prediction of an "Equal rights for clones" campaign (letter, March 15) need not concern us yet awhile. What we need to watch out for now is the promotional message: "You're never alone with a clone."

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES DODD,
Solway, SS West Street,
Corfe Castle, Dorset.
March 15.

From Mrs M. M. Robinson

Sir, Miss Barbara Wanford (letter, March 15) need have no worries about who would programme the video in a world full of female clones. Most adolescent females, if told that they have to be out of the house when the Spice Girls are due to appear on television, will learn to programme any video in a matter of minutes.

OBITUARIES

SHIREEN AKBAR

Shireen Akbar, MBE, head of adult and community education at the Victoria and Albert Museum, died of cancer on March 8 aged 52. She was born on July 13, 1944.

Shireen Akbar was a courageous and innovative arts and community educator, whose work earned her not just an MBE but an international reputation. Through her own example she encouraged two generations of South Asian women — many of them lacking confidence and opportunities, and with English as their second language — to aspire to improve their lives.

She also persuaded major museums to open their doors to the South Asian community. She developed arts education programmes which enabled thousands of women to join the threads of their personal experience in order to create works of art of extraordinary beauty and power.

Born Shireen Hasib in Calcutta, she grew up in an influential Bengali family which moved after Partition to what was to become Bangladesh. She was educated at Vidyamala School and Holy Cross College in Dhaka and at Cambridge University, remaining in Britain to become a teacher in London.

In 1979 she took up a post at Bethnal Green Adult Institute as a language tutor for Asian girls and women. Always quick to perceive others' needs, she recognised that the racial abuse experienced by Asian women outside their homes — and the restrictions placed upon them by their own communities — necessarily meant that language teaching should be only one aspect of her work.

She established links for



Shireen Akbar with a group of schoolchildren in the Victoria and Albert Museum's Nehru Gallery of Indian art

Bangladeshi children between home and school and became an interpreter for families who did not have an English speaker. She collected children from school so that their parents would not worry about their safety, and took them to visit places they would not otherwise have seen. At that time she was virtually alone in this kind of work, and her initiatives redefined community education in London.

They also led directly to *Our Exhibition*, an exhibition in 1982 at the Commonwealth

Institute of art work done by Bangladeshi children. Two years later, by now working for the Inner London Education Authority, she travelled to India and Bangladesh to collect resource material to support multicultural work undertaken by teachers. In 1986 she helped to organise the exhibition *Crafts of Bangladesh* at the Crafts Council which travelled to Birmingham and Bradford. She then raised £5,000 to purchase the exhibition as a permanent resource for schools.

adult education institutions and community centres in east London. These collections are still in use today.

The success of *Crafts of Bangladesh* persuaded the Whitechapel Art Gallery to employ her in 1988 to help to organise *Woven Air*, an exhibition of Bangladeshi textiles, for which she also developed an acclaimed education programme. This proved to be a milestone in her work and was swiftly followed by a commission from the Museum of Mankind to create the exhibition *Traffic Art*, a collection of rickshaw paintings. Through all of these exhibitions Shireen sought to show the continuing beauty and depth of the arts of Bangladesh.

In 1991 she joined the staff of the Victoria and Albert Museum as the first Education Officer in charge of multicultural education and the period of her greatest achievement began. Building on her earlier experience in Tower Hamlets, and inspired by the great South Asian collections in the museum, she developed

a remarkable educational experiment which will endure as a pioneering example of the way in which museums can, and must, communicate the magic and excitement of their collections to people of all ages and different cultural backgrounds.

Supported by the generosity of the Arnolfini Foundation she conceived and brought to fruition *The Mughal Tent Project*. Using the tent as a symbol of home, of refuge, of dispossession and of art she travelled the length and breadth of England inspiring groups of South Asian women to visit the alien environment of the museum galleries and to rediscover their heritage, their creativity and their self-esteem.

From this initial contact with the V&A, often the first time the participants had ever visited a museum, she formed groups to work together in making a tent hanging which would express their aspirations and release their creativity. To her surprise, a project primarily developed for Asian women became a source of inspiration for women from many other communities as widely separated as Los Angeles and South Africa. Using a diversity of techniques, embroidery, collage and paint, they created a sequence of brilliant panels which will go on display in the museum in the summer in the exhibition *Shamiana: The Mughal Tent*.

The success of this project was an example of the power of simple actions to communicate across the divide of religion, education and culture. The power and beauty of these tent panels will be an abiding monument to Shireen Akbar's indomitable spirit.

She was divorced from her husband and is survived by a daughter.

ROBERT DICKE

Robert Dicke, American physicist, died in Princeton, New Jersey, on March 4 aged 80. He was born in St Louis, Missouri, on May 6, 1916.

ROBERT DICKE had the misfortune to be beaten to the most significant cosmological discovery of the past half century by two rivals who did not even realise what they had found until he told them. Together with James Peebles, Dicke had calculated that if the Universe had indeed begun with the Big Bang, relic radiation from that event should be detectable. He was in a meeting in his office at Princeton, planning an experiment to try to find it, when his phone rang. When he picked it up, he said: "We've been scooped."

The call had come from Robert Wilson and Arno Penzias, who had stumbled on the radiation when using an antenna to detect radio noise. They found a signal that seemed to come from everywhere and from nowhere, bathing the Universe in micro-waves characteristic of a temperature of three degrees above absolute zero. Puzzled, they were advised to contact Dicke, who told them the significance of what they had found — the best evidence yet that the Big Bang really occurred. Wilson and Penzias won the Nobel Prize for the discovery, but Dicke did not, an exclusion that some physicists deemed unfair.

Robert Henry Dicke made many important contributions to physics over a wide range of topics. Born in St Louis, he graduated from Princeton in 1939, and then took a doctorate in nuclear physics at the University of Rochester. Joining the Radiation Laboratory at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1941, he spent



the war working on radar, returning to Princeton in 1946. He remained there for the rest of his life, from 1975 as Albert Einstein Professor of Science.

Dicke's experiments on mass supported Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, by showing that gravitational mass (measured by weighing) is the same as inertial mass (measured by resistance to acceleration) to one part in 100 billion. But in 1961 he challenged Einstein's legacy by putting forward, with the graduate student Carl Brans, the idea that gravity might vary with time, becoming weaker as the Universe expanded. This theory ultimately proved at variance with the data, and had to be abandoned, but Dicke remained a major gravitational theorist and contributed greatly to the renaissance of gravity studies that he had begun in the 1950s.

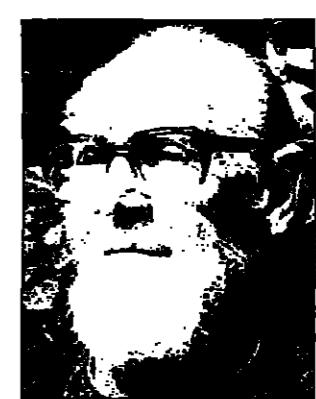
Dicke combined the skills of the experimentalist with those of the theorist, not a common combination. He held more than 50 patents, most of them relating to his work on radar, but he also anticipated the invention of the laser, creating a similar device intended to work with infra-red radiation.

Dicke is survived by his wife Annie, whom he married in 1942, and by a daughter and two sons.

BRIAN

MERRIKIN HILL

Brian Merrikin Hill, poet, died on February 19 aged 79. He was born on June 6, 1917.



A REGIONAL poet whose voice was for a long time not known outside the North of England where he wrote, Brian Merrikin Hill often took as his subject his native Tyneside and Yorkshire, where he worked as a teacher. He has been described by David Gascoyne as "one of the most unjustifiably neglected poets of the age".

He was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the son of a Methodist minister. Two teachers at the Heaton Secondary School in Newcastle nurtured in him a reverence for Shelley and for French poetry; this was to lead him eventually to Oxford, where he read English. Years later, he had two books of translations from the French published: *Saint-Pol-Roux* (Mammon Press, 1986) and *With Planetary Eyes* (University of Salzburg, 1993).

The poverty of Tyneside marked the poet: he was nine at the time of the General Strike. His socialist father was cold-shouldered by some of the better-off of his flock because of his sympathy with those who were out of work.

From such experiences Hill developed a sense of social injustice which found its expression in *Conversational Elegies for a Tyneside Kid*. Although never a believer in traditional Christianity, Hill, like his father, never ceased to seek spiritual redemption for mankind in a world that so often seemed askew.

After leaving Oxford, he taught for some years in private schools, moving in 1948 to the progressive Wennington School, Wetherby, Yorkshire; he was headmaster in his last four years there. He retired from teach-

ing in 1978 in order to devote himself to poetry, in which he carved out for himself a second, more enduring career.

The gift had always been there. His *Eighteen Poems* (1947) is a collectors' item. But a second pamphlet, *Two Poems of Pilgrimage*, did not appear until 1977. Extracts from both publications are to be found in Hill's last collection, *Dolphins and Outlaws*, published by the University of Salzburg in its series *Salzburg Studies in English Literature*.

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Science: the bitter pill forced down once a year

Why does the Sun still go round the Earth?

Time once again for National Brain-washing Week. Hype as insidious as Mother's Day is now in progress to convince us that we ought to pay more attention to the old dear. I refer, of course, to science. National Science Week was dreamt up four years ago by the Department of Trade and Industry to give all those worthy enterprises that already knock themselves out in the name of science a chance to do more of it with the hope that this time some of the "don't cares" will pay attention.

I have nothing against science. Years ago I was chairman of the Association of British Science Writers for two years. Field trips, such as going to see the dinosaur tracks in the Connecticut River Valley or the CERN particle accelerator near Geneva, are among my cherished memories. But I do hate Thought Police, and what is being done in this week, which has no particular claim on the calendar except the theme gap between Mother's Day and Easter, feels like propaganda. Newspapers are pretty immune but the BBC has swallowed it whole.

In aid of what? The one conclusion to be drawn from previous science weeks is that they have had no effect whatsoever. Belief in the supernatural, the irrational, the paranormal has never been higher. Many newspapers would sooner dispense with their weather reports than with their astrologist. Every so often a poll shows that many people still think that the Sun goes round the Earth: it's just common sense, as we can all see for ourselves every night when the sun goes down.

For the converted, Britain is well served. The science programmes on radio and television, and the pages in the newspapers, are very good. BBC2's *Horizon*, at its new grown-up time of 9.25pm on Thursdays, is drawing well over five million viewers a week — impressive when you consider that the alien-haunted *X-Files* gets seven million.

Why not tell some other branch of knowledge that it ought to try harder to spread enlightenment? Why not National Economics Week? I'm sure we all need help telling the difference between GDP and GNP.

I don't buy the argument that Dolly the cloned sheep has made science more interesting to a wider public. What excites people is ethics, religion and survival, not science. They are alarmed at threats to their sense of identity and their cherished beliefs. They want to know what the law should do to control future research. What they do not want to hear is the scientific truth: that nurture is as important as nature in shaping the individual, sheep or child. Dr Steve Jones, the geneticist, puts it best: "If you want



BRENDA
MADDUX

to design your son's future, send him to Exxon." No genetic engineering, he says, will produce such a guaranteed result.

The main lesson about science is failing to get through. Science is a method, not a body of established fact, a way of overturning certainties, not of proclaiming them. How many times in this past agonised year of BSE have you heard someone say "I wish they'd tell us the truth"? As if "they", the scientists, were somehow like the Cabinet, a group who know something they are not telling, rather than disparate investigators around the world puzzled by a disease for which there is still no absolutely proven link to human beings. I once heard a Russian ask my husband, then Editor of *Nature*, the British science journal, "How much of what you print is wrong?"

"All of it," was the answer. That is, in time, today's knowledge will be supplanted.

That warning ought to be at the beginning of all so-called "science" programmes. I would improve them another way. Before plunging into a discussion of Fermat's Last Theorem or the beauty of the square of the number minus-one (see tonight's *Seven Wonders of the World* on BBC2), I would set on the screen "To understand this programme, what you should know is..." Then, at the end, before those endless lists of credits which thank every museum, photo archive and laboratory from here to Yucatan, I would say "What this programme has shown is..."

I would not try to dress up health, diet, religion and gee-whiz gadgetry as "science". I would not try to teach the Second Law of Thermodynamics without explaining what the First Law is. And I would say that scientists who admit to uncertainty are the trustworthy ones. Above all, I would stop insulting science by treating it as a bitter pill that has to be sugared and forced down once a year.

I have always told American friends that Britain did not need presidential-style television debates because the party leaders face each other all the time in the House of Commons. Yet the American model does seem to have stirred an appetite in Britain for encounters more direct and less predictable than the ritualistic *Question Time*. Why not then go the whole American hog and ask the Prime Minister to give regular televised press conferences? Even if these did not yield great moments — such as the veteran reporter May Craig's question to John F. Kennedy: "Mr President, what are you doing for women?" — they would let fresh air into a closed system.

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Eight MPs ready for any action

FIGHTING the general election may seem like small beer to eight intrepid MPs who agreed to experience the rigours of military life for a year as part of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. Their exploits, which were recorded by a BBC2 documentary team, make taking to the hustings look like a doddle.

In the first two programmes in the series, *Politicians on Parade*, Lady Olga Maletta, the Conservative MP, is pitted against John Home Robertson, a Labour colleague, on the Army firing range. Lady Olga apparently took with gusto the challenge of training with the Forces, but admitted she had cheated a little and had hidden an essential lipstick in one of the pockets of her fatigues.

Other game MPs who took part include the Tories Peter Luff and Sir Roger Moore, and the Labour members Andrew Miller and Paddy Tipping.

The final episode shows the Tory Piers Merchant and the Labour Gerry Steinberg experiencing their first Hawk jet



Mix-ups: John Prescott and Jane Moore of *The Sun*

flight. To prepare for the flight the two were put in a decompression chamber and suffered such bad memory loss that Mr Steinberg could not remember the name of the Prime Minister. It is tragic what some MPs will do to get on the telly.

A new front page was drawn up with a huge picture of Mr Prescott looking solemn if not exactly dead, and a team of reporters leapt into action, telephoning hospitals, the emergency services and the Castle. Twenty minutes later, Mr Prescott rang the newsdesk and said: "Er, what's all this about me 'avin' ear attack? Some bugger's been winding you up." Suspi-



Mix-ups: John Prescott and Jane Moore of *The Sun*

cion has fallen on hacks from rival papers.

• GOOD news for pluggers. Channel 5 has made record companies an offer it hopes they cannot refuse. Artists with new releases will be able to get free plugs not once but three times in one day. You provide the artist, the station promises, and we will get them on *Exclusive*, the five-nights-a-week entertainment news show presented by the Virgin Radio DJ Jonathan Coleman, plus on the late-night chat show presented by Jack Docherty and Five's Company, the afternoon magazine programme hosted by a posse of bright young things. How happy the audience will be with such saturation coverage, however, is another matter.

Dressy award

AT THE British Press Awards at the Royal Lancaster Hotel, Jane Moore, women's editor of *The Sun*, was approached by a slavering old boy who thrust a metal slab into her hands and said: "I'd like you to take this award for being the best-dressed person here."

The next morning, she realised what she had been given — The *Guardian's* award for team reporting. Over in

Farrington Road there was

• *Callers to The Sun*, the newspaper that backs Tony Blair, yesterday received a cheery greeting from staff: "Hello, the New Sun."



BELINDA ARCHER

Britvic humiliation for MPs

Attitude-altering slaps

ADVERTISING

BRITVIC Soft Drinks is hoping to repeat the soaring success of its 1991 campaign for Orange Tango by launching an anarchic commercial which exploits the countdown to the general election.

The ad features caricatures of MPs being humiliated in a typical Orange Tango scenario. It will break on March 30 on Channel 5, which begins broadcasting on the same day. Channel No. 5 says it will be the first ad to air on the new station.

Britvic changed the face of soft drinks advertising with its Orange Man slapping people in the face. Sister brands Apple, Lemon and Blackcurrant Tango have used similarly off-the-wall work, with Blackcurrant Tango last week picking up the Best Commercial of the Year prize at the British Television Advertising Awards for its "St George" ad filmed on the cliffs of Dover.

THE Institute of Practitioners in Advertising has run a competition among communications students to create an advertising campaign that will stir apathetic 18 to 25-year-olds into voting.

Fewer than 45 per cent of young people bothered to vote in the last election — an issue that was tackled by a rather lacklustre £750,000 government campaign last year and was debated only last week in the House of Lords.

One winning entrant suggested hiring a youth icon such as Chris Evans to front a rousing campaign to push teenagers towards the polling station.

Perhaps it is not surprising that today's youth feels disenfranchised. One statistic unearthed by the stu-

dents was that 175 MPs are aged over 60 and only 25 under 40.

AGENCY brows will furrow at the news that Stella Artois is siphoning much of its advertising budget this summer into sponsorship and marketing.

The UK's premium lager is injecting £25 million into linking its name with film entertainment by means of, among numerous other projects, broadcast sponsorships of movies on both Channels 4 and 5 and national sponsorship of Virgin Radio's "Big Screen" film round-up show.

Any advertising activity will be virtually lost among all this, with plans for only a modest £750,000 cinema campaign through its agency Lowe Howard-Spink. Last year's total ad spend was a sturdy £4.2 million.

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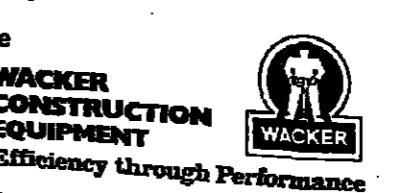
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Channel 5 sets out its new order of the day

Celebrities and comedies to fill the unexploited time slots, reports Alexandra Frean

For the past few months, Dawn Airey, the director of programmes at Channel 5, has been keeping a diary chronicling the ups and downs of her efforts to get the nation's newest television station on air on March 30. Much to the dismay of her boyfriend, she sits down for three hours every Saturday, her only "day off", to write it.

If Airey goes the way of other media launch bosses and loses her job after a few months, she may well find that that diary comes in useful: many publishers would no doubt be interested in publishing *The Confessions of a Channel 5 Insider*.

Airey is too busy to give the idea of failure more than a fleeting thought, however. "I spend all of my days in meetings solving problems. Problem-solving is what I am good at — that and making decisions quickly. Only at around 8pm can I start doing the rest of my work," she says.

Unlike Channel 4, launched 15 years ago proclaiming its minority remit with "Viewers Keep Out" signs all over it, Channel 5 is entering a market hungry for more choice, and expecting to have its mass-market tastes catered for. The margins for error are therefore quite small.

There is a big expectation from both the audience and the advertising community for us to perform well immediately. The audience won't tolerate anything that is of a lesser standard than we see elsewhere," Airey summarises. She later admits, however, that at least one show in her schedule is a "real turkey".

Airey has already revealed Channel 5's programming hand quite extensively, placing emphasis on its user-friendly "stripped and stranded" approach to scheduling and its heavy reliance on American imports. Britain's first daily soap, *Family Affairs*, will run at 6.30pm; a celebrity gossip show at 7pm; nature and wildlife programmes at 7.30pm; the news at 8pm; leisure and lifestyle shows at 8.30pm and a night movie at 9pm. It is hardly earth-shattering stuff.

Where advertisers believe that Channel 5 seems most likely to make its presence felt is at the margins of its schedule, in the afternoon and late



Dawn Airey believes there is "an expectation to perform well immediately"

at night. These are areas where the existing terrestrial channels have a patchy record. Although the audiences are small at this time of day in absolute terms, Channel 5 is well placed to do well in terms of audience share.

Airey describes her mid-afternoon programme, *Five's Company*, as a "high-energy gang show" presented by bright young things and offering chat, celebrity interviews and games and quizzes that the audience can play at home. "It will have the feel of a radio phone-in show on television," Airey says.

"All the existing broadcasters now recognise that there's a potentially large audience in the afternoon. I tried to cater for it when I was at Channel 4 with *Love in the Afternoon*, which was aimed at young housewives," she adds.

Rival broadcasters have already taken note and begun to schedule competitively against

Channel 5. *Channel 4* has just launched *Pet Rescue and Collectors Lot* in the afternoons, and *ITV* has gone into the afternoon on a network, not a regional, basis. That is a direct result of us. All of those shows are catering for an older audience, and yet half the audience available to view at that time is under 50," Airey says.

The other slot where advertisers believe that Airey has placed herself is post-1pm, which has a distinctly "young urban male" feel. Airey hopes to achieve every day at this time what *Channel 4* and *BBC2* have already achieved on Friday nights. That is, to create a raft of youth-oriented comedy programmes aimed at those too young to be in bed but too satisfied with life to be out trying to change the world.

At 1pm, Jack Doherty, the

Although Airey won't say

so, the shows are clearly expected to push the boundaries of taste and decency to the limits and to take Channel 5 beyond the audience that actually watches it. With few light alternatives on the rival channels, the slot might just be one where the channel's audience share rises above the 5 per cent which Airey says she is aiming for overall.

Airey is also pinning her faith in Channel 5's nightly showbiz gossip programme, *Exclusive*, presented by the Virgin Radio DJ Jonathan Coleman. She intends to generate publicity for the show by feeding titbits from it — (yet more) celebrity interviews, star scandals, Hollywood casting tips etc — to the tabloid papers. "I expect the programme to result in stories in the press every day."

She denies that the programme will run out of ideas. "Every day there are five terrestrial channels and 30-odd satellite channels. There are masses of stories concerning the stars," she says.

Ajoker in the pack for Airey may well prove to be the channel's Saturday evening prime-time light-entertainment show, *Night Fever*. Based on a format bought in from the French broadcaster TFI, it has all the madcap exuberance and intellectual paucity of Chris Evans's *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush*. The programme, hosted by the Madness singer Suggs, pits celebrity teams against each other in a topical quiz, punctuated by karaoke singing contests, where the audience — including those at home — is expected to join in. It is daft, but it might just catch on.

Claiming that she always wants to offer an alternative to the other main channels, rather than present them with head-to-head competition, Airey says she has no intention of copying *Channel 4* and *BBC2* by running themed seasons. Instead, she is hoping to run evenings built around a major special event, such as the British Fashion Awards, one of the few glamour events still not given the full TV treatment.

Scottish stand-up comedian, has been given a chat show based on the American David Letterman format. It will include more celebrity guests, live music, scripted gags and topical chit-chat. The potential returns of such a show are high, particularly given the lack of any real competition in the evening chat show stakes. However, previous attempts to introduce Letterman-style programmes into the UK have failed miserably, even with presenters as experienced as Danny Baker and Jonathan Ross, so the Doherty strategy is a risky one.

The programme will be followed by several strands of risqué comedy programming, such as monologues by Jenny Eclair, a sketch show called *We Know Where You Live*, a celebrity quiz show *Bring Me the Head of LE* (Light Entertainment) and a medical quiz show, *Tubs and Fibs*.

Although Airey won't say

AS commuters emerged from mainline stations in London on Monday morning they were assailed with an unusual sound. Instead of the roar of the traffic, they heard the skirl of the pipes. This was not, as you may imagine, the result of some uncompleted Jacobite business from 1745, it was a marketing exercise: the launch of *The Scotsman* as a properly distributed national newspaper in the South East. From this week, late editions of a publication which calls itself Scotland's National Newspaper will be flown down from Edinburgh to London, reaching the warehouses early enough for it to be on sale in newsagents alongside the London-based *Scotsman*.

Scottish news, opinion and up-to-date football results, will now be available on breakfast tables in Mornington Crescent as well as Morningside for the first time since the paper was founded in 1817. It is the fulfilment of a dream long held. Hitherto *The Scotsman* has trundled down by train, arriving too late to reach any but a scattering of outlets. Its London sale, as a result, has rarely risen above 1,200, and frustrated expatriates have waxed of complaining about its absence. As Editor, I argued fruitlessly for a London print run, but came away defeated by the cost.

The paper's current owners, the Barclay Brothers, have deeper pockets. Initially the paper will be flown down at considerable expense. Later, the idea is to print in London. Plans for a reciprocal arrangement with the *Financial Times* have come to naught, but there are other iron in the fire.

The question now is what will it achieve, and whose interests are being served? The immediate circulation objectives, as outlined by the paper's Editor, Martin Clarke, its Editor-in-Chief, Andrew Neil, and its Chief Executive, Bert Hardy, are modest: possibly 3,000 to 5,000, rising to 10,000 in a few years. On purely financial grounds that hardly counts as a worthwhile exercise. A similar investment in Glasgow, where the paper currently has only a wretched 6,000 circulation, would produce better results.

But London is where the paper's owners would like to make their mark. They want *The Scotsman* to be talked about as a national rather than a regional paper, they want it to feature on the *Today* programme, they want it to be noticed.

And so it should be. In the run-up to a general election and in its aftermath, Scottish devolution will be a key issue. To be able to read about it from a Scottish perspective in London should be invaluable for anyone who believes there is intelligent

Magnus Linklater on a Scottish circulation drive

Flying Scotsman carries the banner of devolution

life north of the Wash. On the other hand, the idea that *The Scotsman* might become a latter-day *Manchester Guardian*, fulfilling a need for a non-metropolitan voice in the South, is probably unrealistic.

At the point where *The Guardian* went "national" in 1961, it already had more than 40,000 readers in the South, with every evidence that this was only the tip of the iceberg. In today's television age, there is unlikely to be a huge demand for a paper from the north, outside a small circle of Scottish exiles, and institutions with an interest in Scottish markets and politics. My bet is that a gain of 5,000, modest as that may sound, is about the right target.

Of more concern to its existing readers is the paper's political stance. It has long been axiomatic that *The Scotsman* is the voice of devolution, a left-of-centre, decentralist, radical paper, representing the broad consensus of Scottish opinion, out of sympathy with successive Tory administrations, and committed to political reform. That may all be about to change.

Monday's edition announced that the paper now believes Labour's plans for a Scottish parliament to be "grievously wounded" because of its failure to answer the West Lothian question. The idea that Scottish MPs should be allowed to debate English matters at Westminster while English MPs had no say over Scottish issues is, the paper argues, dishonest and unworkable. It therefore proposes an answer: Scottish members should have no vote when it comes to deciding English issues at Westminster. "Let the English control their own affairs," said its banner headline. And its leader made it clear that "nothing else will do".

Both Tories and Scottish nationalists have expressed their delight at this solution. But the notion that Tony Blair will agree to gag his Scottish backbenchers, to say nothing of his Scottish-dominated Cabinet, is absurd. It would mean, for instance, that Gordon Brown, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, would be unable to vote on a Bill concerning hospital provision in the South East or investment on Merseyside. It is, in short, every bit as unworkable as the issue the paper claims to address.

What the new line does raise, however, is another question altogether: could *The Scotsman* find itself lobbying for a "no" vote in Labour's referendum on a Scottish parliament, thus incurring the wrath of its readers? After all, it could hardly endorse a constitutional scheme for the future government of Scotland which, by its own admission, was fatally flawed.

THE SCOTSMAN

Scotland: Let the English control their own affairs

Monday's edition: available in London

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The Times offers you a FREE ticket, worth at least £7.50, for the first ever BBC Good Homes Show at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, from April 9-13. Collect three differently numbered tokens and send them, with a stamped sae marked on the front with which day you wish to attend and the application form which will appear again on Saturday. Your name will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win the Miele kitchen, right. You can see live performances of BBC shows in the Lloyds Bank Insurance Direct Celebrity Theatre. Call 0121 767 4000

THE TIMES
THE BBC
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SHOW
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Blair is in tabloid heaven

It was an "historic" announcement, said *The Sun* as it declared its support yesterday for Tony Blair and New Labour — and the treatment of the story by other editors suggested that the claim was no exaggeration. It made the two main television news bulletins, *Newshight* and the *Today* programme, and was reported on the front pages of *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and the *FT*.

With *The Mirror* also endorsing Blair — but now forced to declare itself as the paper for "Labour's TRUE supporters" — the electoral map of Britain's national newspapers has been decisively redrawn compared with 1992, when *The Sun* continually derided Neil Kinnock as a potential Prime Minister. If the *Daily Star* votes with its readers and eventually opts for Labour — and my bet is that it will — all three mass-market tabloids will be backing Blair.

The Sun has ten million readers a day, *The Mirror* has six and *The Daily Star* has two million. Even if the *Daily Mail* and *The Express* eventually endorse the Tories, Labour will be supported by three papers with a 3-1 majority of the 24 million tabloid readers.

Yet does the support of *The Sun* really matter to Tony Blair? Do newspapers really help to win elections? Since Blair and Alastair Campbell, his press secretary, have fought so hard to win *The Sun's* endorsement, one answer is that it obviously does matter to them — and

PAPER ROUND

Brian MacArthur

DECEMBER 25, 1996

which suggests that what they read in their newspaper did not affect their vote.

Another achievement by Blair has been to persuade the editors of newspapers that what readers absorb from their papers day by day must have some effect, especially if it is relentlessly derogatory.

It can, however, be demonstrated that *The Sun's* hostility to Kinnock in 1992 may well have influenced its readers to vote Conservative in several crucial marginal seats (but see Simon Jenkins on page 18). MORI polled voters throughout the election and found a sharp swing to the Tories in the last four days as *The Sun*, *Mail* and *Express* led a front-page blitz against Kinnock.

Among Labour's main target seats were Slough and Hayes, where *The Sun* is read in nearly one in two homes. Among *Star* readers, the swing to the Tories was 4 per cent. Assuming that they were influenced by their paper, the *Star* effect delivered 1,104 votes in Slough, where the Tory majority was 54, and 732 in Hayes, where the Tory majority was 54.

John Major can, nevertheless, be cheered that more than three million readers of *The Sun* voted Labour at the last election despite its vitriolic campaign against Kinnock.

"Nor will there be any 'Nightmare on Blair Street' in *The Sun*, which could — just conceivably — tip over to Blair on election day," *Paper Round*, September 25, 1996.

ANTI-TORY VOTE

The percentage of Lib Dem or Labour readers in 1992 and today

1992	97
1996	50
Daily Mail	53
Daily Star	45
Express	54
FT	51
Independent	33
Star	44

Source: MORI

claim to power. Even *The Daily Telegraph* said yesterday that Labour was no longer a disgrace or a joke. As the *Daily Mail* described the Tories as "jaded, fractured and rudderless", it added that Blair had rendered his party electable with a vengeance. The result — with *The Sun* for Blair, the *Mail* impressed



CHANGING TIMES

NEWS

Tories abandon school plans

Plans to allow greater selection and the expansion of grant-maintained schools were sacrificed by the Government in the rush to clear the legislative decks before Parliament rises on Friday for the general election.

On the second day of the election campaign, Conservative business managers were forced, during negotiations with their Labour counterparts, to drop 19 clauses from the education Bill, including plans which they said would pave the way for a grammar school in every large town..... Pages 1, 8, 9

Ministers lose fast track to Lords

John Major is preparing to break with tradition by declining to give peerages to all the former senior ministers who are retiring. He believes peerages should go to senior figures likely to carry on working for the Conservative cause..... Page 1

Thatcher papers

Baroness Thatcher announced that she is giving her huge archive of papers on permanent loan to Churchill College, Cambridge, to allow scholars to study her premiership..... Page 1

Zaire threat

The prospects of a military coup in Zaire grew after the Parliament passed a vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister..... Pages 1, 15

Cash for questions

The postponement of the publication of the Commons report on the cash for questions affair will be the subject of a new investigation by the Nolan committee on standards in public life..... Page 2

Surgeon shot dead

A British surgeon died in his wife's arms after being shot at a remote police checkpoint in the Congo when he argued with armed policemen..... Page 3

Cheaper discs

A price war has erupted between supermarkets which are offering big discounts on Top 40 compact discs in an effort to win the lucrative music market..... Page 4

Cricket strip

Members of the country's oldest first-class cricket club were surprised to find the nude figure of their beleaguered club secretary gracing the pages of *British Naturism* magazine..... Page 5

Yes, we have five billion bananas

Bananas have replaced apples as Britain's most popular fresh fruit, with about five billion eaten every year. It is a far cry from the Second World War when Britons had to make do with a concoction of mashed parsnips flavoured with sugar and banana essence. The Government gave one to everyone under the age of 18 when the first postwar supplies arrived ... Page 1



Girls in past and present Putney High School uniforms at the Albert Hall for the 125th anniversary of the Girls' Public Day School Trust.

Birth alert

Women are being subjected to unnecessary Caesarean and forceps deliveries which cause them injury and waste resources, a health service watchdog says..... Page 6

Elvis victory

A former barrow boy won his High Court battle against America's Elvis Presley industry over the right to sell novelty soaps and trinkets to British fans..... Page 7

BBC board attacked

The BBC's Board of Governors, a group of part-time, well-intentioned amateurs drawn from the great and the good, should be abolished, the Heritage Select Committee said..... Page 10

Albanian tension

The flood of Albanians fleeing across the Adriatic to southern Italy approached 10,000 with reports of growing tension between residents and immigrants..... Page 12

German uproar

The Ruhr was in uproar as Germany's snowballing protest movement switched its focus from the coal pits to the steel foundries..... Page 13

Clinton worry

President Clinton's controversial fundraising antics claimed a member of his inner circle when Anthony Lake withdrew his nomination as Director of the CIA..... Page 14

BUSINESS

Gas charge: BG may have to knock billions of pounds off the value of its assets following the completion of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation..... Page 25

VAT loophole: The Treasury is losing millions of pounds of VAT because HM Customs and Excise is not rigorous enough in its checks on large organisations, says a report by the National Audit Office..... Page 26

Borrowing on target: The Government is expected to beat its public sector borrowing target this year after new figures showed only a small rise in the PSBR..... Page 25

Markets: The FTSE 100 fell 16.5 to 453.8. Sterling fell 0.4 to 95.7, falling from DM2.6817 to DM2.66643 and \$1.5868 to \$1.5876..... Page 28

SPORT

Rugby union: John Richardson, the Rugby Football Union president, has denied claims by Fran Cotton, the Lions manager, that England and France seek to break away from the Five Nations..... Page 44

Football: Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, is expecting a disciplined performance against FC Porto in the European Cup quarter-final..... Page 48

Golf: Nigel Mansell, the former Formula One world champion, made a successful start in the Sunningdale Foursomes, winning by 3 and 2..... Page 43

Cricket: The Grand Hotel, Brighton, is the grandiose setting for what is expected to be a stormy annual meeting of Sussex County Cricket Club..... Page 48

ARTS

Roll up, roll up: From Kathleen Turner treading the boards at Chichester to spectacular costumes at the Notting Hill Carnival: *The Times* offers a guide to the top summer festivals..... Page 37

Flower show: A new David Hockney exhibition opens with a theme that is exuberantly floral. "I chose it to cheer myself up," says the artist, 60 this year..... Page 38

Bombay mix: At the Barbican Zubin Mehta conducted music by Indian composers, with a Mahler symphony thrown in, to celebrate his country's 50 years of independence..... Page 38

Review: *Adriana Marques*, a production at the King's Head, Islington, trawls through three decades of satirical songs and sketches..... Page 39

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Neck and neck: How unfortunate that the leaders of the two main parties should have plumped for such similar neck-wear..... Page 16

Dress sense: "He's sort of medium, really." Buying clothes for a man is so much more stressful than shopping for a woman..... Page 16

Bullied: Tania Clayton has just won £200,000 as compensation for five years of bullying. What made her put up with it?..... Page 17

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Brainwashed: Why does the BBC fall for National Brainwashing Week, as National Science Week should be known, asks Brenda Maddox..... Page 22

Five life: Dawn Airey, the director of programmes for CS, tells of her diary on getting the channel on air by the end of the month..... Page 23

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House-proud: The main parties tell of their housing plans..... Page 41

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Long delayed details of the Russian Government reshuffle suggest that President Yeltsin is serious about bringing in his A-team for economic reform. It could be the coalition that is needed to cut corruption and waste in the bureaucracy, the banking system, the monopolies and the social sector that is retarding growth — *Moscow Times*

TV LISTINGS

Preview: Cells taken from an American woman who died in 1995 raised hopes of a cure for cancer: *The Way of All Flesh* (BBC2, 9pm). **Review:** Matthew Bond on horrors of a media war..... Page 47

OPINION

Publish or be damned: If the electors of Tatton want to know whether or not their Member is a "liar and a cheat" before deciding to vote for him, they cannot, on past record, take Mr Al Fayed's word for it. They need Sir Gordon Downey's..... Page 19

Lake in the drink

The current charged environment in Washington certainly contributed to Mr Lake's downfall, but did not exclusively create it..... Page 19

Cultural campaigns

Depending on how the count is taken, there are now about 500 festivals during the British season..... Page 19

COLUMNS

SIMON JENKINS: In 1995 Tony Blair flew to see Rupert Murdoch to audition as Prime Minister. The great man approved. Blessing was conferred. New Labour, old Commonwealth Page 18

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

A conference has been proposed but who would put their faith in the so-called "international community" and endless mediators and conferences? I left with a horrible feeling that here, too, the lines may be drawn first in blood..... Page 18

PETER RIDDELL

Mr Blair should be wary of courtly support from those with whom he really disagrees. He could do with a few enemies as well as probably fairweather friends..... Page 8

SIMON BARNES

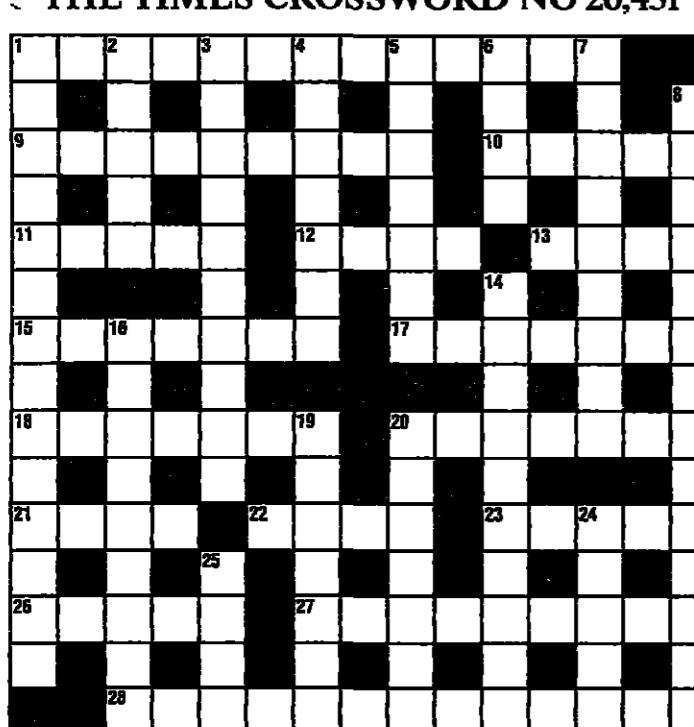
Nothing motivates as forcibly as a desire for revenge. Jeremy Guscott demonstrated as much with an outstanding display against Wales, having been omitted by the coach for most of the season..... Page 46

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Scilly Isles 6.51 pm to 6.61 pm

Woolacombe 6.52 pm to 6.62 pm

St Mary's 6.53 pm to 6.63 pm

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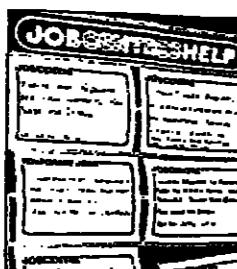
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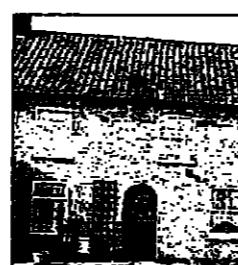
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Do the numbers add up in the jobless count?
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The country cottage where John Major lived as a baby
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Sweet revenge: the day Guscott broke loose
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WEDNESDAY MARCH 19 1997

Sink in kitchen sales takes shine off Limelight shares

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LIMELIGHT, the kitchen company that came to the stock market in a controversial flotation last November, saw its shares plunge 25 per cent yesterday as it disclosed a dramatic fall in kitchen sales.

The shares, which had already fallen 17 per cent on Monday, ended the day down 35p at 107½ p, against the flotation price of 175p.

Limelight said group sales in the first quarter of this year are down 11 per cent on a year earlier. The problems at Maben Kitchens were particularly bad, with sales down 32 per cent. In the same period last year, its sales rose 74 per cent.

Maben's weakness was partly offset by Kitchen Direct, whose sales rose 17 per cent. In 1995, Maben Kitchens and Kitchens Direct accounted for nearly 40 per cent

of group sales. Their combined total this year is down 24 per cent.

Limelight's kitchen was twice criticised by the BBC's *Watchdog* programme in December, and the company is taking legal action.

Ashley Lewis, finance director, agreed that the programmes could have affected sales. "There could be a link," he said.

Sales of Dolphin fitted bathrooms, which share the same show-

rooms as Maben and which accounted for 18 per cent of sales in 1995, were down 11 per cent on last year. Sharps bedrooms and Portland conservatories are the only divisions trading satisfactorily.

The company ran into controversy last year over the role of Stephen Boler, former chairman and the company's creator. He resigned the chair before flotation and became a non-executive director. He sold the

bulk of his stake when the company came to the market, raising around £60 million to invest in an African safari park. He still holds 17 per cent. No new money was raised for Limelight in the float.

The company said yesterday that its forecast of operating profit before exceptional items of £16.5 million in the year to December 31 has been met. It will give more details with preliminary results on April 3.

Limelight may decide to bring its results announcement forward, but it is hampered by the absence of its chairman, Andrew Thomas, who is overseas. A spokesman noted that weakness in the fitted kitchen market had been highlighted by MFI. However, MFI recently reported like-for-like sales growth of more than 7 per cent.

Pennington, page 27

BG faces writedown of £5bn on assets

BY CARL MORTISHED

BG, which owns the British Gas pipeline network, could be facing a £5 billion writedown of its assets.

Expectations that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission will adopt the Ofgas valuation of the Transco pipeline network mean that BG may be forced to consider whether there has been a permanent impairment of the economic value of Transco's assets.

Such a move could also have implications for the pipeline company's profits as accounting rules may not permit BG to cut its depreciation charge in line with the asset reduction.

The book value of the Transco assets is about £18 billion, recorded in BG's current cost accounts and filed at Companies House. But Ofgas has adopted a regulatory asset value for Transco of about £12.5 billion. The difference is at the heart of the dispute between BG and its regulator.

City analysts have been probing BG's management to find out what the company will do to its balance sheet if the MMC adopts the Ofgas regulatory asset value. The company is believed to be in talks with Price Waterhouse, its auditors, over the dilemma.

The problem is compounded because BG works on current cost accounting rather than historic cost and, in a period of low inflation, there are few comparatives for dealing with the notion of permanent asset impairment. BG will have to decide whether the economic value of the assets has been impaired and whether the change is permanent.

Even more serious for BG is the possibility that the company's reporting of profits may be affected by an asset writedown. Price Waterhouse is believed to have advised BG that it may not be able to reduce its depreciation charge in line with the reduction in

asset value. Under current cost accounting, it is thought the depreciation charge must reflect the real cost of sustaining the asset base.

The cost of sustaining Transco's 2,500 kms of pipelines and other facilities are at the hub of the dispute between Ofgas and BG. By reducing the value of the asset base, the regulator has disallowed a large portion of the amount set aside by BG in its accounts for renewing the assets. In so doing, Ofgas arrives at a lower regulated income for BG in its pricing formula.

The asset writedown alone is unlikely to disturb City analysts. Ordinarily, such a move would be followed by a profit upturn. Concerns about regulatory risk and windfall taxes have lead the stock market to value BG at a big discount to even the Ofgas asset price of £12.5 billion.

The market value of BG is currently about £7.5 billion or almost £12 billion including its debts. Analysts attribute a value of some £4 billion to BG's upstream and international businesses, suggesting a market worth for Transco of only £7.5 billion, well adrift of the regulatory value.

However, suggestions that the depreciation charge against profits will not be reduced has serious implications for BG's dividend. The company has already indicated that it will distribute all of Transco's profits.

BG's management have been battling on several fronts in their effort to win concessions from the regulator and now from the MMC. Alongside the question of asset valuation is operational cost. The City is expecting BG to win some extra income from the MMC, in the range of £100 million to £150 million in the form of an allowance for higher operating costs.

Tempus, page 28



Peter Kindersley, chairman and chief executive of Dorling Kindersley, which aims to sell more of its books through its door-to-door network

Borrowing within target and City expectations

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

PUBLIC borrowing looks set to undershoot the Government's Budget forecast this year after another month of healthy tax receipts.

The public sector borrowing requirement totalled £3.6 billion in February, according to the Office for National Statistics. This was lower than the City had been expecting and left cumulative borrowing in the first 11 months of the current financial year at £14.1 billion, against £22.2 billion at the same stage last year.

Even excluding privatisation proceeds, there has been a substantial improvement on last year. Ex privatisation, the cumulative PSBR in the 11 months of the financial year so far was £18.3 billion, compared with £24.5 billion in the previous year.

Most economists are now predicting a substantial undershoot of November's official prediction of a £26.4 billion PSBR for the full year, perhaps in the order of £2 billion to £3 billion.

Martin Brookes, of Goldman Sachs, said yesterday that the buoyancy of tax receipts also augurs well for a continuing fall in the PSBR.

next year. He is predicting a PSBR in the 1997-98 financial year of £19 billion.

Central government cash receipts are up 7.4 per cent on the year, against the 5.7 per cent increase predicted in the Budget. All of the main revenue categories — income tax, corporation tax and VAT — are running above target.

However, Jonathan Loxnes, of HSBC Markets, put yesterday's positive news into context, noting that, even if the year's PSBR were to total only

£23 billion, this would still be almost twice as large as was envisaged by the Government only two years ago. "Hence we continue to believe that the next Government would be well advised to tighten fiscal policy at some point," he said.

"As well as improving the public finances, this could help to ease the upward pressure on sterling by minimising the need for further rises in interest rates."

The pound struggled again yesterday, largely because of strength in the mark. Sterling's effective index against a basket of currencies dropped to 95.7 at the close, from 96.1 on Monday. By the close in London, it had lost 154 pence to DM2.6667.

The mark has been boosted in recent days by increasing doubts about the single currency going ahead on schedule. Klaus-Dieter Kühhbacher, a member of the Bundesbank's policy-making council, said yesterday that he doubted that Germany would meet the Maastricht convergence criteria and that delaying the start of monetary union was the only option if that were the case.

1994/95 1995/96 1996/97

1994/95 1995/96 1996/97

1994/95 1995/96 1996/97

Budget forecast: £26.4bn

AM J J A S O N D J F M

Dorling Kindersley hit by profit warning

DORLING KINDERSLEY,

the publisher, saw £36 million wiped from its market value yesterday as a profits warning sent its shares down 16 per cent (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company said its US business had been hit by book superstores cutting stocks by ordering only four weeks in advance, instead of 12.

The company aims to re-

cover by selling more titles through its own door-to-door network, but it said the switch will hit this year's profits.

Pre-tax profits in the six months to December 31 were £6.78 million (£6.23 million), and earnings per share were 5.9p (5.1p). An interim dividend of 1.5p is due on May 23.

The shares closed at a three-year low of 270p yesterday.

VAT concern

A National Audit Office (NAO) report today reveals weaknesses in value-added tax collection from large organisations that could be losing the Treasury millions each year and called for greater scrutiny. Page 26

Acquisitive

Charter Group, the conglomerate, said it was considering further acquisitions but declined to comment on market speculation it was sizing up Howden, the industrial fanmaker.

The shares closed at a three-year low of 270p yesterday.

Page 27: Tempus Page 28

What makes MONEYSENSE the most flexible mortgage for directors and the self employed?

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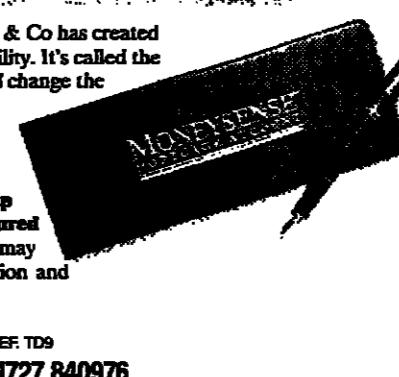
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ALLIED DUNBAR

Investors urged to sack poor board performers

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

SHAREHOLDERS should try to sack company bosses who do not merit their pay, directors' leaders say today.

The advice by the Institute of Directors that poorly performing company directors should be fired is the furthest that a leading business organisation has gone in putting forward proposals to reform boardroom pay.

The IoD, whose Director-General, Tim Melville-Ross, was a member of the Greenbury inquiry into directors' pay, today publishes a research paper on directors' remuneration, making clear that business still has a number of concerns about the issue.

The institute says it is for shareholders, and especially institutional shareholders, to bring pressure to bear on the remuneration committees of companies if they disagree with their recommendations. The IoD says: "Specifically, shareholders should oppose the re-election of directors who do not, in their

Barclays seeks approval for lucrative incentives

BY ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BARCLAYS is to seek shareholder approval next month to give no "key" executives at BZW, its investment banking arm, lucrative new compensation packages to reward superior performance.

The radical US-style pay proposal in the Barclays annual report, published yesterday, relates to a BZW long-term incentive plan for 60 directors and executives of the investment banking division. If shareholders approve the plan at the annual meeting on April 22, the bank will pay generous bonuses linked to the performance of BZW and the Barclays share price.

To qualify for the incentive plan the BZW executives will have to wait three years to receive their payouts, which will be in Barclays shares, not cash.

Barclays, which last month unveiled a 13 per cent rise in annual pre-tax annual profit to £2.3 billion, said in its annual report that the total value of

18 directors' payments had almost doubled to £5.6 million from £3.2 million the previous year.

The largest sum was paid to Bill Harrison, chief executive of BZW, who joined last September and who earned a one-off £2.9 million as the price of luring him from Robert Fleming, Martin Buxton, chief executive of Barclays, saw his total 1996 package rise to £820,000 from £685,000. Andrew Buxton, chairman, received a £24,000 pay rise to £806,000. Lord Lawson of Blaby received £31,000 in his role as non-executive director.

Mr Taylor has already stated that he has enough confidence in the bank's risk system for BZW — which contributed £204 million to profits last year, against £249 million previously — for the investment bank to take on more. His view is that "high risk is not necessarily bad risk".

This example shows the increased repayment of capital and interest for a typical mortgage of £100,000 at 10% fixed rate of interest. The figure is based on a 25 year term of 250 monthly payments. The example shows the effect of a 1% increase in interest rates. The example does not include stamp duty or other charges.

Hoskyns attack on EMU 'folly'

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SIR JOHN HOSKYNNS, chairman of Burton Group, launched an attack yesterday on the single currency project which he said will cost business millions of pounds, whether or not Britain joins.

Speaking at the Retail Week and British Retail Consortium annual conference in London, he said: "That effort and expenditure will be at worst premature, at best - for this is my hope - wasted altogether. But one way or another, it will have to be spent and spent early."

Sir John is the latest in a series of businessmen to enter the debate on whether Britain should join a single currency. Niall Fitzgerald, chairman of Unilever, and Chris Haskins, chairman of Northern Foods, are among those who have urged early entry.

However, Sir John, head of the Prime Minister's policy unit in 1979-82, said supporters of monetary union are pursuing the creation of a single European federal state. "The eventual aim is to turn it into a new superpower to rival the United States, Japan and the new economies of the Far East."

The contribution to the debate from big business has been disappointing, he said. "Big business seems to have accepted, uncritically, the idea that EMU is a low-cost, low-risk device which will remove exchange rate risks inside Europe without any damaging side effects. That is a naive view."

Sir John added: "I think the single currency will happen in some form, but I hope I am wrong. The best we can hope for is a small core ... Whatever the final outcome, we can be pretty sure that the dream of the larger project will not be abandoned until it has done as much damage as it can do, to the greatest number of people ... I hope and pray that we stay out of this folly."

Audit office fears weakness in VAT system costs millions

By ADAM JONES

A NATIONAL Audit Office (NAO) report today reveals weaknesses in VAT collection from large organisations that could be losing the Treasury millions each year.

Although the report was largely complimentary about Customs and Excise, which collects VAT, the NAO said that dozens of big organisations may not have been checked rigorously enough.

The report focused on large traders, bodies that pay an unusually large amount of

VAT, or are judged to have particularly complex accounts.

They are seen as a riskier source of revenue and, as value-added tax is a self-assessed tax, the liabilities they calculate are checked more closely than usual.

In 1996 Customs and Excise identified 1,500 large traders that contributed £1.4 billion, or 34 per cent of the total net VAT collected in the UK.

The extra checks carried out by Customs and Excise revealed £300 million in additional monies owing. The

amount varies enormously from case to case, but the average additional VAT charge resulting from large trader checks is about £200,000.

However, in a sample of 652 traders with more than £50 million of VAT flowing through each of them a year, the NAO said that 40 should have been subject to the tougher checking regime but were not classified as large traders. It added that they may have received inadequate scrutiny.

The report said: "A number of initiatives are in development which will further improve the department's arrangements for large traders. Nevertheless, there are some ways in which these arrangements could be made more efficient and effective."

Customs and Excise is to conduct a "comprehensive" review of the 40 traders as part of a wider package of tweaks. It is also looking at differences in the way that local offices approach large trader checks.

The NAO report showed large variations in the amount of resources used to carry out the audits. Collectors in north-west England put proportionately more resources into an average large-trader check than almost any other region.

In the North West, the monitoring of a typical local authority, a significant class of large trader, used almost four times as many resources as the same procedure in south-east England.

A Customs and Excise spokeswoman said: "We are undertaking a review of methods that are being used by local offices."

Wolseley wary on housing markets

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

WOLSELEY, the builder's merchant, yesterday sounded a cautious note about the UK housing market, which it says remains fragile, and about the US housing market, which it expects to slow down in the next six months.

The company also noted that the strength of sterling is likely to cost it around £4 million in the second half.

The group made a pre-tax profit of £124.3 million in the six months to January 31, up from £111 million a year ago.

First-half earnings were boosted by buoyant business conditions in the US, but the Austrian and French markets remained weak, and progress in the manufacturing division was hit by sterling's strength.

Richard Ireland, chairman, said that housing starts have slowed in the US recently.

It is likely that the rate of growth will slow during the second half, since our companies experienced an upturn in the equivalent period last year," he said.

Wolseley will pay an interim dividend of 3.3p (3.1p on July 31).

The company says that the UK housing market is reasonably buoyant in the South East, but patchy elsewhere, and the effects of the rise in housing starts are not likely to be felt until later in the year.

"Consumers may be reluctant to increase expenditure to any great extent until after the election," the company said, adding: "Whilst the margin trends are improving, compared with the second half of last year, there are still substantial pressures throughout the supply chain."



John Young, Wolseley chief executive, yesterday

Societies Bill expected to pass test

By ANNE ASHWORTH

THE Building Societies Bill, which gives wider powers to the building societies, will go to the Lords today after an unopposed second reading in the Commons yesterday.

Some peers object to the haste with which the Bill is being rushed through Parliament in the dying days of the

Government. They argue that this speed leaves too little time for debate.

However, Treasury sources now expect no obstacles to the Bill passing into law, as it has the support of Labour and, in particular, the support of Mike O'Brien, the Shadow Economic Secretary.

If all goes according to plan in the Lords, the Bill should

return to the Commons for its final stages tomorrow.

Some of the societies that are becoming banks this year have been fiercely opposed to the Bill. At present, societies that join the stock market can rely on a five-year period of protection from takeover. Under the terms of the Bill, this protective shield will be lost if the society makes a bid

for another financial services business. Those societies wedded to their traditional mutual status have supported the Bill, as it will allow them to compete more directly with banks and diversify into new areas. Currently, a society can only have an agency in a rural post office. If the bill is passed, the society will be able to operate the post office.

SIB delays disciplinary shake-up

By ROBERT MILLER

PLANS to pin responsibility for "catastrophic" financial or supervisory failures on senior executive officers have been put "on hold" on the orders of the Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the chief watchdog.

The Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), regulator for brokers and futures dealers, had planned to publish details of its consultation exercise on how the watchdog proposed to switch the burden of proof in disciplinary cases. But yesterday the SFA said that its proposed refinements would not be issued until "we know that our proposals are in line with the SIB's standards."

The SFA sought to beef-up its rules in pinning responsibility on senior managers in the wake of the Barings crash. It was stung by criticism that it was unable to discipline Peter Baring and Andrew Tuckey, previously chairman and deputy chairman of the bank. The watchdog decided that in future senior managers would have to demonstrate that they had not been negligent rather than the watchdog proving the case.

The SFA said that despite the delay it "will continue to stress the responsibility of senior management for the control and compliance environment of their firms".

Pennington, page 27

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Delta sets sights on finding new markets

DELTA, the cables company, said yesterday that although its restructuring plans are progressing it would be concentrating on developing new markets, especially in Asia and Eastern Europe. With low gearing of 22 per cent it was well positioned to drive growth through acquisitions and organically, said Jon Scott-Maxwell, the new chief executive, who joined in October.

Mr Scott-Maxwell's comments came as Delta revealed a 14 per cent fall in full-year pre-tax profits to £45.6 million. Turnover fell 7 per cent to £950 million. The total dividend is unchanged at 18.9p a share (14.4p final). Delta took an exceptional charge of £5 million to cover the rationalisation of its plumbing and circuit protection businesses, and a further charge of £6.6 million to cover the cost of loss on disposals.

BSG to sell dealership

BSG INTERNATIONAL, the car parts manufacturer and car dealership, is to separate its two core businesses by selling Bristol Street Companies, the car dealership, to a management buy-out team for £7.2 million. BSG will buy 20 per cent of the new equity in the buy-out company for £6 million. BSG, which will change its name to Britax International in May, reported pre-tax profits for 1996 of £9.28 million, down from £24.05 million a year earlier. A final dividend of 2.75p (2.5p) payable on July 1, will give a total of 3.52p (3.2p).

Meggitt back in black

MEGGITT, the engineering and aerospace group, returned to profit in 1996 after a major restructuring last year. Pre-tax profits were £24.3 million, compared with a loss of £21.5 million in 1995, when the group closed two business units and sold 12. Earnings per share were 7.3p in 1996, against a loss of 13.4p in 1995. The final dividend rises to 2.85p, from 2.63p, making 4.2p (3.95p). At the year end, order intake was 8 per cent up on the previous year. The order book for delivery in 1997 was 17 per cent higher than at the same time last year.

Wagon shares slide

SHARES in Wagon Industrial fell 20.1p to 286p yesterday as the engineering group announced a dividend cut and a £35 million bill to cover the cost of restructuring. Underlying profits for the year to March 1997 are expected to fall to about £20 million (£27 million). Wagon intends to pay a final dividend of 5p to make a total of 12p, a reduction from 19.8p. The shake-up at Wagon follows the appointment of David Kendall as chairman at the start of the year. The company said it intended to focus on engineering businesses with good growth prospects.

Heal's to raise £14.3m

HEAL'S, the furniture retailer, will have a market capitalisation of £21.3 million when it is floated on the stock market next week. The company is to raise £14.3 million from a placing of 6.73 million existing and 1.43 million new shares at 17.5p each. Dealings will begin on March 24. The flotation will provide £1.8 million for the company, while five directors will share £2.3 million. NatWest Ventures, which backed the 1990 management buyout, will claim the rest with the disposal of its entire shareholding. *Tempus, page 28*

Watmoughs disappoints

WATMOUGH'S, the printing company, announced disappointing results yesterday, saying conditions in the print media sector remain difficult after paper price increases. Pre-tax profits fell to £22.2 million, from £23.7 million in 1996. Earnings per share fell to 21.7p a share, from 23.8p. The total dividend is raised from 9.5p to 10.45p, with a final of 7.7p. Patrick Walker, the chairman, said: "The market for paper is much more stable and there is evidence of new launches and greater buoyancy from publishers."

Tempus, page 28

Card Clear expands

CARD CLEAR, the credit card verification group, is to expand into America with the \$10.5 million acquisition of a similar company there. Transaction Billing Resources (TBR), based in New Jersey, runs a "hot card" database used by telephone operators who check credit card transactions before connecting the call. TBR processes about 700,000 transactions a month and last year made profits of \$500,000 on sales of \$3 million. Shares of Card Clear rose 2p yesterday to a high of 47p on the Alternative Investment Market.

Irish Nationwide up

THE Irish Nationwide Building Society lifted annual pre-tax profits to just over £124 million from £122 million in 1995. The record growth in lending to £1240 million reflects the continuing buoyancy of the Irish housing market. The society reported a 14 per cent increase in total assets to more than £1 billion, with a 12 per cent increase on reserves to £133 million. The society's cost to income ratio dropped last year to 32 per cent, from 34 per cent in the previous year.



NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that a Special General Meeting of The Bristol and West Building Society (the "Society") will be held at 11.00 a.m. on 15 April 1997 at the Westex Conference Pavilion of the Royal Bath & West of England Society Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6QN for the following purposes: To consider and, if thought fit, to pass the following resolution which will be proposed as a Special Resolution:

INVESTORS' RESOLUTION

- 1 That:
 - (A) the transfer of the whole of the Society's business to Reading Mortgages plc (to be renamed Bristol & West plc); and
 - (B) the terms of such transfer set out in and pursuant to the Transfer Agreement dated 26 February 1997 made between the Society, The Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland and Reading Mortgages plc, as such terms and/or Agreement may for the time being and from time to time be amended:
 - (i) to the extent that any such amendments are not material, by agreement between the Society, The Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland and Reading Mortgages plc; or
 - (ii) at the direction of the Building Societies Commission pursuant to section 98(5) and (6) of the Building Societies Act 1986.
- be and are hereby approved.

To consider and, if thought fit, to pass the following resolution which will be proposed as a Borrowing Members' Resolution:

BORROWERS' RESOLUTION

- 2 That:
 - (A) the transfer of the whole of the Society's business to Reading Mortgages plc (to be renamed Bristol & West plc); and
 - (B) the terms of such transfer set out in and pursuant to the Transfer Agreement dated 26 February 1997 made between the Society, The Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland and Reading Mortgages plc, as such terms and/or Agreement may for the time being and from time to time be amended:
 - (i) to the extent that any such amendments are not material, by agreement between the Society, The Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland and Reading Mortgages plc; or
 - (ii) at the direction of the Building Societies Commission pursuant to section 98(5) and (6) of the Building Societies Act 1986.
- be and are hereby approved.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

M Anthony Langdon
The Secretary

Members of the Society may obtain copies of the Transfer Document which contains the Resolutions and statements relating thereto and proxy voting forms from the Society's Information Office, PO Box 27, Broad Quay, Bristol BS99 7AX. Freephone 0800 886633.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia S ..	2.11	1.95
Austria S ..	19.85	18.36
Belgium S ..	5.27	5.27
Canada S ..	2.26	2.12
Cyprus CypC ..	0.837	0.782
Denmark Dk ..	10.81	10.01
Egypt Msk ..	0.55	0.55
France Fr ..	9.45	8.80
Germany Dm ..	2.64	2.53
Greece Gr ..	4.41	4.11
Hong Kong S ..	12.95	11.95
Iceland ..	1.20	1.00
Ireland P ..	1.07	0.99
Italy It ..	5.25	5.00
Japan Lira ..	20.20	20.45
Japan Yen ..	209.70	190.70
Lithuania Ltr ..	0.08	0.06
Netherlands Gld ..	3.168	2.988
New Zealand S ..	2.44	2.22
Norway Kr ..	11.41	10.61
Portugal Esc ..	261.00	252.50
Russia Rbl ..	0.92	0.92
Spain Pta ..	239.00	222.00
Sweden Iz ..	12.91	12.11
Switzerland Fr ..	2.44	2.25
Turkey Lira ..	208.00	195.00
USA S ..	1.683	1.535

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.</

Societies do well by doing good A minor victory for United Biscuits SFA makes a late leap for the bandwagon

"ONE-OFF, unrepeatable offer? Regular customers, just get to your local branch of J Sainsbury or Asda this weekend and load your trolley up with cash! No catches, no hidden extras! This offer is not available at branches of Tesco or Safeway."

Too good to be true, alas. Instead we have had to rely on our local building societies to outdo each other in displays of generosity to members of the public prepared to stick with them. Windfalls from the Halifax and the Woolwich in return for the freedom to convert to public status are one thing. This week two of that dwindling band with no ambitions to become banks or financial supermarkets are also claiming to be handing back £100 million to customers.

But the sweeteners on offer from the Yorkshire on Monday and the Bradford & Bingley today are an inspired example of making a virtue out of a necessity. For example, these and Nationwide's £200 million per year "customer benefits initiative", about half of profits, can be seen as the cost of dividends societies would have had to pay to shareholders, if they had any as public companies. Instead the money is paid to their effective shareholders, that is, members, as higher interest to lenders and lower mortgage rates. This allows non-converting

societies to operate with a built-in pricing advantage. The supermarkets have been able to effectively delay discounts of 1 per cent or so. That £200 million, or £45 million in the case of the Yorkshire and whatever from the Halifax and the Woolwich in return for the freedom to convert to public status are one thing. This week two of that dwindling band with no ambitions to become banks or financial supermarkets are also claiming to be handing back £100 million to customers.

Given this in-built advantage, customers should gradually migrate from the converters offering worse rates to the remaining mutuals. They should grow their 20 per cent share of the mortgage market at the expense of those newly converted banks with stock market quotes to service.

Except that this would suggest that the good guys might finish first, and that can never happen, can it? So what can go wrong?

Customer inertia might prove so overpowering that the converters can continue to charge what they like. The latter's new shareholders might insist on action before market share is eroded, by cutting costs,

closing branches and behaving like any other bank, so allowing margins to begin to compete with the mutuals.

Many of the 60 or so mutuals expected to survive might grow so lazy and so inept from their protected status, like lions at the zoo whose hunting instincts have become atrophied, that they can no longer be bothered to seek out market share.

They might turn out to be the Co-op rather than John Lewis, and scant competition for Sainsbury. A few years of managed decline, and a quiet implosion — and all we are left with is the big supermarkets and banks.

P-p-pass off a Penguin

YES, yes, the big four supermarkets did change most of our lives for the better in the 1970s and 1980s. Now they control more than half of all food sales and are becoming as bad as a bunch of overmighty subjects as top trade unions were before. And look what happened to them.

Hard-pressed United Biscuits

has won a minor victory against Asda. Archie Norman, Asda's self-promoting boss, developed a brand-beating Puffin chocolate biscuit with strangely similar packaging to UB's Penguin. UB has won an injunction against the passing off, although nothing will happen pending appeal. UB's counsel noted drily: "There is no inherent connection between maritime birds and chocolate biscuits."

Asda said this was just a bit of fun and UB a humourless spoilsport. But nothing could be more deadly than the blatant use of monopoly power to override intellectual property rights. This lesson is one of the first that Western countries try to inculcate in former communist states.

Few manufacturers can afford to stand up in court to the big four, who can wipe their products from the shelves.

Coca-Cola challenged Sainsbury more than two years ago. The grocer finally changed its own-label cola can. The dispute spawned a code of conduct agreed between manufacturers and retailers requiring the latter to "avoid commercial plagiarism in packaging and trade dress".

This code appears to carry about as much authority as as the unions' social compact with Lord Callaghan, which ended up with the winter of discontent. Kellogg's complained bitterly over Tesco's lookalike own-label cornflake packets.

Unilever, which spent millions developing and protecting the daffy named "I can't believe it's not butter", was not pleased by Asda's "You'd better believe it" spread. Grand Metropolitan, which spent much brainpower developing a new market with its Malibu coconut liqueur, nearly choked on Asda's Windward.

Eighteen years after the winter of discontent, Labour abhors strikes. But the Tory candidate for Tunbridge Wells (not Tain) seems to think property is there for the taking, or at least for the passing off.

One watchdog not having its day

WHEN a rogue trader runs amok, senior management should be brought to book by the relevant civil watchdog — if the latter is allowed to act unhampered. When the Securities and Futures Authority said it could not proceed against Peter Baring and Andrew Tuckey over management failures at Barings, there was almost universal condemnation and the so-called "Tuckey gap" was born.

So the SFA tried to address this by putting the burden of proof on senior managers to demonstrate why they should not be held responsible for the failings of juniors. The approach had already worked well for another regulator, Imra, in the Jardine Fleming case. At Morgan Grenfell even the threat of intro action over Peter Young was enough for seven managers and super-

visors and some very senior ones at that, to leave the firm.

But the decision by the Securities and Investments Board, yet another of this teaming band of regulators, to intervene in the debate looks suspiciously like a late bid to jump on the bandwagon. The SFA desperately needs to strengthen its rules, in particular to deal with the NatWest Markets incident. A delay for the chief watchdog to publish its mere thoughts on the matter, not even detailed rules, is helpful to nobody.

Our back pages

"WHAT is clear is that Mr Boler has become exceedingly wealthy while those who enter into deals with him tend to lose out," this column wrote on November 15, as Stephen Boler brought his Limehouse Group to the stock market and pocketed £60 million. "As he is selling shares, do you want to be buying them?" And oh, how the company complained. Investors who paid 175p for shares now worth 107½p might ponder which of us was right. And NM Rothschild and Cazenove, respectively banker and broker, after one of the shortest gaps between prospectus and profits warning in corporate history might wonder how much longer they need decently stick around.

Charter silent as talk turns to Howden

BY CARL MORTISHED

CHARTER GROUP, the conglomerate that owns Esab, the Swedish welding equipment business, is considering acquisitions but is refusing to comment on speculation that it is sizing up Howden, the industrial filmmaker.

Profits at Charter fell from £103 million to £47 million owing to the exceptional loss on the sale of its 65 per cent stake in Cape, the building products group — after the write-back of goodwill previously written off the balance sheet. Operating profit from continuing businesses rose from £89 million to £92 million, with an 8 per cent gain in profits from Charter's rail track equipment business.

Charter is seeking to add a third division and could spend between £250 million and £500 million on acquiring a new business. Speculation that a bidder is pursuing Howden, capitalised at almost £280 million, centred on Charter but the company would not be drawn. At the year end, after the Cape disposal, Charter had no debt and cash resources of £35 million.

Tempus, page 28

Britannic Assurance plans Peps

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

BRITANNIC Assurance, the door-to-door life and pensions office, plans to diversify into lending and unit trust Peps.

Brian Shaw, chief executive, said that offering Peps would increase Britannic's presence among wealthier savers, and developing a credit business would benefit the bulk of its existing 1.2 million policyholders, who needed another source of borrowing because many had no bank account.

Britannic had a setback in its move into home insurance, in which policyholders fell slightly, to 170,000, last year.

Overall, new regular premiums rose by 7.7 per cent, to £37.1 million, and new single premiums increased by 16.8 per cent, to £137 million.

Operating profit before tax rose 66 per cent, to £84.2 million, aided by a £23.2 million transfer after a settlement with the Government on "orphan assets". As part of this, the company is paying a 23p final dividend, making 28p.

CRT pays £23.8m for rival

BY FRASER NELSON

CRT, the training and recruitment company, has become the lead player in computer staff contracting after buying IKPG, its rival, for £23.8 million. The deal was the first fruit of the £100 million cash injection that CRT gained last August by selling a controlling stake to a team of American businessmen.

Karl Chapman, chief executive, said: "We now have phenomenal ability to out-invest our competitors." With £75 million of the capital injection left over, he would be "disappointed" if CRT did not buy another company this year.

CRT is paying up to £16.9 million in cash, the balance in loan notes and paper. In the year to September 30, IKPG made underlying profits of £500,000 on sales of £45.1 million. It is expected to add about 40 per cent to CRT's business.

CRT's shares gained 3½p to 255½p yesterday.

Shake-up costs put Claremont into red

HIGHER than expected reorganisation costs meant Claremont Garments, a major clothing supplier to Marks & Spencer, dived £3 million into the red last year, the company revealed yesterday. (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The cost of closing its Glasgow factory and laying off 600 staff were £7.6 million against expectations of £6 million.

Added running costs during the reorganisation took a further £2 million of profits, according to Peter Wiegand,

A virtue out of necessity

PENNINGTON



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STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

BG puzzles the pundits with a mystery 5p rise



Stuart Lyons celebrated a share rise of 3p for Royal Doulton

WHAT is going on at BG. Brokers in the Square Mile were asking themselves yesterday as shares in the now demerged British Gas defied a falling market to make a useful gain on the day.

By the close of business the price had shaken off recent nervousness to finish 5p better at 173p in heavy turnover that saw 17.5 million shares change hands.

The decision to demerge British Gas into two separate companies, BG and Centrica, was the brainchild of its accident-prone management. But the City has never fully shared the company's enthusiasm for the manoeuvre. Even so, the flurry of activity in the shares suggests that something is afoot and that some much-needed good news may be at last on the way for long-suffering shareholders.

Elsewhere, share prices continued to extend this week's losses, reflecting political uncertainty in the run-up to polling day on May 1. Fresh losses in bonds and the recent retreat by the pound on the foreign exchange.

The equity market managed to recoup half of its earlier losses, with the FT-SE 100 index closing 16.5 down at 4,36.8. It was 33.2 down at one stage. Total turnover reached 836 million shares, bolstered by a large number of bed and breakfast transactions to establish tax losses before the financial year end.

The weak pound is likely to be good news for British Steel, up 4p at 158.4p, which was also benefiting from the proposed offer of DM35 million from Krupp-Hoesch for Thyssen, the rival steelmaker.

ICI lost more ground in the wake of Monday's profit downgrading by Kleinwort Benson, the broker, ending 15p lower at 761p after touching 766p.

The strong pound has also taken its toll on Dorling Kindersley, the publisher, to the tune of £1.5 million. In the first six months it cost the group £800,000. The share ended 3p lower at 770p. The strong currency is also causing problems for Servisons, 22p down at 357.1p. Profits last year grew 30 per cent to £3.55 million.

BAT Industries closed 1p cheaper at 517.1p after the latest victory in a Florida court for the anti-smoking lobby. But the group's success at imposing a 4 cents a packet

increase on cigarettes has been well received.

Shares of Fleitech tumbled 64p to 680p as brokers continued to reflect on this week's proposed link-ups with the BBC. The two have agreed to develop a number of new digital subscription channels. In a second joint venture they will acquire 65 per cent of UK Gold, currently owned by

BT shrugged off renewed worries about windfall taxes that would be imposed by a Labour Government, to finish 6p dearer at 442p or 43.4 million shares changed hands. It follows Monday's presentation for brokers to discuss prospects after the acquisition of MCI. The brokers came away bullish.

Fleitech, and develop the business. The Fleitech share price was also depressed by the sale of £7 million worth of shares in the company by Roger Luard, chief executive.

Royal Doulton, where Stuart Lyons is deputy chairman, achieved a solid increase in profits last year despite increased competitive markets in both Britain and the US. Profits at the fine china group

were up 15 per cent at £17.6 million. The shares rose 3p to 289p.

English China Clays continues to reel from the poor reception given to this week's profits news with the price losing 7p at 200p. Kleinwort Benson is reckoned to have cut its forecast for the current year by £4 million to £65 million.

A price war appears to have

News of heavy restructuring costs and plans to cut the dividend left Wagon Industrial nursing fall of 20p at 280p. The group is writing off more than £3 million for the reorganisation. Wagon saw its price tumble from a peak of 436p last year after several profit warnings.

Limelight Group was another loser, falling 35p to 107p after confirming a sales slump. The bathrooms and kitchens supplier said trading in the first 12 weeks of the year had been "disappointing".

Better than expected profits lifted Rowhorne Group 16p to 214p, while a solid performance from Grashey was good for 12p on the shares at 170p.

Wilson Connolly finished

6p better at 166p after announcing plans to pay a special dividend of 5p.

■ GILT-EDGED: The London bond market continued to lose ground, but outperformed most of its overseas rivals. Brokers reported a flattening of the yield curve as losses among shorter dated issues matched the longer dated stocks.

The Bank of England plans to auction a further £2.5 billion of Treasury 7s per cent next Wednesday.

The June series of the long gilt ended seven ticks lower at £105.32 as a total of 63,000 contracts were completed.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015 shed four ticks at £103.83 as did Treasury 8 per cent 2000, which closed at £103.32.

■ NEW YORK: Interest rates remained foremost on the minds of investors and shares were subdued. By mid-day the Dow Jones industrial average was 15.48 points lower at 6,940.00.

at 10pm. Source: Datamonitor

Dorling Kindersley: READING THE SMALL PRINT

Source: Datamonitor

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

550
500
450
400
350
300
250

FTSE all-share index (rebased)

Dorling Kindersley share price

Closing Prices Page 31

Three Mth Sterling

Previous open interest: 53,927p

Three Mth Euro/UK

Previous open interest: 114,303p

Three Mth Euro/eur

Previous open interest: 23,252p

Three Mth Euroyen

Previous open interest: 1,919p

Three Mth ECU

Previous open interest: 207p

FTSE 100

Previous open interest: 750p

Commodities

ICIS-LOR (London Allport Oil)

CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

Brent Crude (May) 19.25 19.30

Brent 15 day (May) 19.40 19.25

WT Texas Intermediate (May) 21.35 20.40

WT Texas Intermediate (June) 21.20 20.30

PRODUCTS (\$/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

ROBUSTA COFFEE (\$/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average price per representative market

Pig 14.15 15.10 16.15

Sheep 12.15 12.15 12.15

Lamb 12.15 12.15 12.15

Veal 12.15 12.15 12.15

Beef 12.15 12.15 12.15

Chicken 12.15 12.15 12.15

Duck 12.15 12.15 12.15

Goat 12.15 12.15 12.15

Sheep Lamb 12.15 12.15 12.15

Lamb Leg 12.15 12.15 12.15

Steak 12.15 12.15 12.15

Steaks 12



Leslau chases screen dream

IT HAS been a busy week for Nick Leslau. Only 24 hours after announcing his decision to take Noddy to America, the chief executive of Trocadero yesterday staked his claim to open Europe's first Pepsi MAX 3D cinema. Towering five storeys high and spanning the width of an Olympic swimming pool, the £6 million state-of-the-art cinema is to be housed in the Piccadilly leisure complex.

In the crossfire

ROGER BOOTLE came under fire at Bloomberg's bunt to discuss the proposition: "New Labour, New Government". Sandwiched between William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Labour counterpart Alastair Darling, HSBC's chief economist was clearly caught in the middle. A bearded Darling sniped at Bootle, who was acting as compere: "You're doing your Liberal role-playing, just like Paddy." Waldegrave retorted: "No, he's not at all like Paddy, he's very sensible." Ouch.

Smouha reward

WHO better to keep an eye on finances at The World Bank than Brian Smouha? As a reward for taking on two of the most sensational banking scandals in recent history — Banco Ambrosiano and BCCI — the Deloitte & Touche partner is to become lead auditor to the Bank. One major plus for Smouha, who recovered some 90 per cent of Ambrosiano's assets, is that he can resign as the Luxembourg liquidator to BCCI. He also gets to relocate to Washington. Virtue, as they say...



Bookies buzzing

BOOKMAKERS flew into a spin after the news that *The Sun* is to back Blair. Ladbrokes moved the number of seats Labour will win from 364-370 to 372-378. Meanwhile, City Index has upgraded the number of seats predicted to be won by Labour from 365-371 to 373-379. Punters appear to have a different view, however. Since the opening of trade yesterday morning, they were busy buying the Tories (predicting more than 238 seats) and selling Labour (predicting less than 375 seats).

INSPIRED by Marjorie Scardino's mission statement on Monday, Dennis Stevenson has upped his stake in Pearson. The incoming chairman of the media and leisure group bought another 30,000 shares, adding to the first tranche he bought from former managing director Frank Barlow.

Viscount Lords it

TONY BLAIR'S economics spokesman stepped into Lord Marsh's shoes yesterday as chairman of Lopex. Viscount Tom Chandos, a former corporate finance director at Kleinwort Benson and executive director of Boots & Company, will take over from Lord Marsh, the former Cabinet Minister in Harold Wilson's administration and chairman of British Rail, who now sits as a cross-bencher in the Lords.

MORAG PRESTON

Seek and you will find truth on jobs is hard to work out

Philip Bassett surveys the battle lines drawn in the dispute over how to count unemployment



Official figures have reported unprecedented numbers getting on their bikes

the second largest for 25 years, at 67,800. "We thought we might get one month's hit," acknowledges one senior Whitehall figure. "We didn't think we'd get this."

The sheer scale of the falls — the drop from October onwards is the same as the total fall for the previous year and a half combined — is making business and the City suspicious, let alone the Government's political opponents. More than a quarter of a million people have come off the count since October.

Sudhir Jumabhakar, associate director for economic analysis at the Confederation of British Industry, says: "We have to take these figures with a very large pinch of salt."

Bank of England officials agree. The Bank's last inflation report was sceptical, suggesting that even the not-yet fully comparable unemployment figures from the Government's quarterly *Labour Force Survey* "implies that the labour market did not tighten as quickly in autumn 1996 as the fall in the administrative claimant count indicates", citing particularly a JSA effect. So what is it? What has been, and is being, the effect of the introduction of JSA on unemployment in Britain?

After an average fall in the jobless of 19,300 over the previous six months, the drop in October was 45,600. November witnessed the biggest fall in unemployment for a quarter of a century, when the full effects of the sharp jump in the monthly decline when the full effects of JSA came into being last October.

Though the monthly falls in unemployment had been accelerating as JSA started to come into effect for new claimants, no one was prepared for the sharp jump in the monthly decline when the full effects of JSA came into being last October.

After an average fall in the jobless of 19,300 over the previous six months, the drop in October was 45,600. November witnessed the biggest fall in unemployment for a quarter of a century, when the full effects of the sharp jump in the monthly decline when the full effects of JSA came into being last October.

ain? Inevitably, there are a number of answers, and these are complicated by an inter-departmental row in Whitehall that means the Government having, in effect, two answers. The main views are:

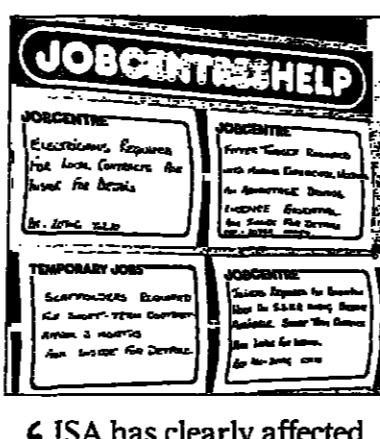
□ Statisticians: JSA has one key effect on the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the

ed by this, mainly because the ONS has suspended its estimate of the monthly trend in unemployment, depriving ministers of what might have been a potent weapon in the election campaign. Ministers would like their unemployment ball back — to kick it at the opposition.

ONS officials try to disentangle the impact of JSA into three elements. The first relates to changed office procedures — the time benefit office staff are taking to assess and process claims, given an unfamiliar benefit, and the conversion to a new computer system to process JSA claims. They estimate that the flow on to the jobless count has therefore been lower than would otherwise have been the case, depressing the count by up to 8,000, but they believe these effects will be temporary, as the system beds in.

Secondly, they believe a shift to earlier means testing is having an effect

on the stock of unemployment. Including a likely 5,000 reduction in today's figure, ONS officials believe that the total impact of this element has been to reduce the claimant count by about 15,000. Thirdly, they cite what are called "behavioural" effects, deter-



JSA has clearly affected the jobless figures

Government's statistics-collecting and producing arm: it makes it nervous. Battled by the political disputes over unemployment figures, the ONS has sought to determine the JSA effect, and where it cannot, to say so. Ministers have been irritated

Making a case for letting sleeping watchdogs lie

Christine Buckley on how MPs viewed the regulatory industry



Spottiswoode: endorsement

Littlechild: bolstered

tor, could prove a welcome add-on to RPI-X.

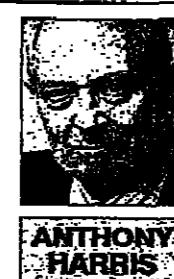
A number of companies have opted to offer consumer rebates and voluntary price-cutting. But the problem with voluntary arrangements is that they are ad hoc and at the company's discretion. The water regulator has already experienced intransigence from one company.

An alternative way of curbing profits is to set a rate of return that the company is permitted to achieve on its assets. This form of regulation operates in the United States and is less incentive-oriented than RPI-X, which works to encourage cost savings and efficiencies within companies. But the formula also stands accused of encouraging unnecessary capital investment to secure greater returns.

RPI-X, meanwhile, is criticised for its opposite effect of encouraging short-termism among businesses anxious to deliver immediate savings and productivity increases at the expense of longer-term investment planning.

The committee has further recommended that the Government should keep a check on regulators' budgets to ensure they have something with which to combat the financial might of the regulated businesses.

When the Labour Party has stopped waving the report as backing for its windfall tax, its own trade and industry team must decide whether to endorse the report's tinkering approach or go for a more radical reform of regulation. If Labour forms the next government the renewal date for all the utilities' price controls will come up in 2000, two years ahead of another general election. If it does nothing to the regulatory process it must hope that, by then, controversy and condemnation have indeed been overtaken by the level of satisfaction that the trade and industry select committee anticipates.



ANTHONY HARRIS

EMU: danger of wishful thinking

This column is an election-free zone. It shouldn't be. EMU was until recently the issue facing the next Parliament. But now it is the great unmentionable, and not just among politicians. Until recently the bond markets "knew" that EMU would launch on time. Continental bond yields converged, and Sterling was an election play: Labour would take us in to the benefit of gilt. But now, dither. Convergence plays are unwinding. The election here, Labour leads, but gilt yields are edging up. All bets are off.

Across the Channel, meanwhile, wishful thinking — not my words, but those of a Commission official, describing German economic projections designed to show that everything will be all right on the night. How true Chancellor Kohl, dismissing all doubts, sounds more and more like John Major, who proclaimed Britain's "irrevocable" membership of the ERM — up to the day he revoked it. Anyway, the idea of the Fat Controller missing his own start is appealing in itself, so Iaps are being licked.

Wishful again. An optimistic forecast can still be right. German near-term growth prospects depend almost entirely on how quickly that economy responds to devaluation; and since Germany has not devalued within living memory (unless you count the dollar bubble in the early 1980s), that is a matter of pure guesswork. Germany could still qualify, at least on the borrowing test. And does strict compliance with the numbers really matter? The Chancellor may like to proclaim that "three means three", but he is talking about keeping Italy out of EMU, not letting Germany in. The Treaty is fuzzier.

It says that a deficit over 3 per cent of GDP will qualify if it is "exceptional and temporary". The 60 per cent limit on the government debt/GDP ratio, which Germany will almost certainly fail to meet, looks less elastic; but the sanction is

Trouble, he says, could emerge not slowly, through regional decline, but suddenly, and in the bond markets. National debts, he says in the current issue of *Prospect*, will no longer be the sovereign debt the market knows — bonds subject to exchange-rate risk, but backed by the power to print money. They will carry solvency risk, like Liverpool Docks and Harbour, or New York City. Or, say, Belgium?

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	1996	1995
	£m	£m
Turnover	950.0	1018.5
Profit before interest	55.5	63.4
Profit before tax	45.6	53.1
Earnings per share	15.2p	20.0p
Dividends per share	18.9p*	18.9p*

* Final dividend to be paid as a Foreign Income Dividend (FID)

Copies of the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 28th December 1996, from which the above is an extract, are available from 4th April from the Secretary, Delta plc, 1 Kingsway, London WC2B 6XF. Telephone 0171-836 3535.

CABLES

Cowie bus takeover endorsed

The Government has backed the Monopolies and Mergers Commission conclusion that the £300 million takeover by transport group Cowie of its rival British Bus was not against the public interest. John Taylor, Minister for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, agreed with the MMC that, nationally, the takeover could mean more competition, not less. He said London's bus market was regulated enough to guarantee competition, even though Cowie is the capital's biggest private operator. Cowie now controls more than a quarter of all London's buses.

Pathfinder aim

Pathfinder Properties, which owns and rents out housing in London, plans to join the Alternative Investment Market next week. Andrew de Candole, chairman, has put up £750,000 to buy out shareholders who hold stakes through the Business Enterprise Scheme. The company, expected to be capitalised at £1.4 million, will concentrate on home conversions from commercial property. It has already bought a former telephone exchange in Wimbledon, south London, which it plans to turn into 104 apartments.

BT link-up

British Telecommunications will increase its operations in Japan through a joint venture next month with Marubeni Corporation, the Japanese telecoms business, that will aim to increase the business by offering direct access to global services. BT will have a 51 per cent stake, Marubeni 31 per cent and minority shareholders the rest.

Secure future

Secure Trust, the financial services company, is paying a final dividend of 14p, making the total 20p (18p). Secure's pre-tax profits for 1996 edged higher to £9.4 million. Income from its bill-paying service for consumers rose 10 per cent.



Ian Black, managing director of Wilson Connolly, left. David Lawther, finance director, centre, and Lynn Wilson, chairman

Sterling threatens Glynwed's 'first real growth this decade'

By OLIVER AUGUST

GLYNWED International, the engineering group, is benefiting from the strength of the housing market, which has offset the cost of the rise in sterling. The growing number of people moving into new homes has boosted sales of consumer durables.

Volume growth at Glynwed's consumer durables unit reached 15 per cent last

year after declining for seven years. A spokesman said: "This is the first real growth we have seen this decade."

Glynwed is market leader in the leisure cooker market and has seen sales of gas and electric cookers increase across the board. The spokesman said: "Once house sales get under way this pulls through in the consumer durables sector."

But the group gave warning

that export growth was under threat from exchange rate shifts, with the strong pound likely to have a significant effect not only on its operations, but on the UK economy as a whole.

Glynwed is highly exposed to European currency shifts. Of its £150 million worth of exports, £90 million is destined for Europe. It maintains, however, that the rising pound would not necessarily

help its European competitors. A spokesman said the competitors may prefer to raise their prices in order to restore margins squeezed after sterling's free fall after Black Wednesday in 1992.

Nevertheless, Glynwed expects the negative impact of the rising pound on its results to grow in 1997 despite being hedged in the currency markets. In the calendar year 1996, the group's pre-tax profit

increased slightly from £84.9 million to £86.4 million. But profits were cut back to £70 million by one-off provisions of £16.3 million. Earnings per share fell to 18p from 25.76p.

The dividend was maintained at 12.75p, with the final payment of 8.35p to be made on June 6.

The exceptional charges mainly resulted from provisions totalling £12.5 million for the disposal of Wednesbury Tube, its copper business. The sale was finalised on February 28 and further disposals of non-core units are expected. The group has not made any further provisions so far. At the same time it said it was also looking for strategic buys.

A further factor limiting profitability during 1996 was the slump in metal prices. Between mid-1995 and mid-1996, prices fell by almost 40 per cent. The spokesman said: "This fall hurt profits in our metals distribution division. However, the division is still comfortably profitable."

The product monitoring division, which made £2.2 million (£3.2 million), is expected to grow slowly but will benefit from cost-cutting. The environmental arm, which saw profits recover to £2.2 million (£1.2 million), may receive a boost from new US legislation. A final dividend of 3.9p, due on May 27, will maintain the total at 6.6p.

Graseby seeks healthcare growth

By PAUL DURMAN

GRASEBY, the electronic instruments group increasingly concentrating on drug infusion, is in the market for more healthcare acquisitions.

The company expects to clear its £5.4 million of borrowings through the sale of two small businesses that make infra-red sensors and industrial controls. Paul Lester, Graseby chief executive, is

likely to expand the medical division's range of pumps and bags, but would also be interested in closely related areas.

Graseby reported annual pre-tax profits up from £6 million to £10.5 million, its best results for five years. The medical division, strengthened by the 3MIT business bought last July, contributed higher profits of £5 million

(£4.2 million) despite weak demand from the National Health Service.

The technology division, which includes Graseby's chemical weapons monitor, increased profits to £3.2 million (£1.4 million). Having recently won £60 million of contracts from the US and Swiss governments, Mr Lester said the group is now bidding

for a \$400 million contract from the US defence department.

The contract, to replace existing monitors with smaller ones, will require Graseby to find a US partner.

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A final dividend of 3.9p, due on May 27, will maintain the total at 6.6p.

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Profits up at Wilson Connolly

By ADAM JONES

PRE-TAX profit at Wilson Connolly Holdings, the housebuilder, rose 17 per cent to £26.4 million in 1996, on the back of the patchy property revival.

Turnover rose to £300 million (£245 million), driven by buoyancy in southern England. In total, 4,154 new homes were sold in 1996, with an increased average selling price of £61,580 (£59,600). Three- or four-bedroomed houses accounted for 66 per cent of sales.

But the performance in Scotland – where difficulty in obtaining planning permission hindered growth – and northern England was disappointing, with prices for new homes remaining flat.

A final dividend of 3.44p (3.18p), payable on June 2, and a special dividend of 5p, payable on April 4, are proposed.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Cantab and Glaxo link in vaccine deal

CANTAB PHARMACEUTICALS, the biotechnology company, will receive £11 million from Glaxo Wellcome as part of a deal that gives the drugs group exclusive rights to a potential vaccine against genital herpes. Glaxo Wellcome will bear the development costs and will have exclusive worldwide marketing rights over Cantab's DISC HSV vaccine for herpes simplex virus infections.

As well as a £5 million licence fee, Glaxo Wellcome is paying £6 million for a 4 per cent stake in Cantab – equivalent to a price of 965p a share. Jurek Sikorski, Cantab's chief executive, said this was an endorsement of the company's technology. The HSV vaccine is unlikely to be ready for market until 2002. Cantab will receive royalties on sales, in addition to further milestone payments. Sir Richard Sykes, Glaxo Wellcome's chief executive, said he was "very excited" about DISC HSV, which combines "important safety features with the prospect of considerable therapeutic potency".

World Telecom value set

PETER GELARDY, founder of Jazz FM, will become a paper millionaire next week when World Telecom, a phonecard producer, joins the Alternative Investment Market valued at £2.2 million. Mr Gelardy will have a £3.87 million stake in World Telecom, the company he founded three years ago with Peter Neilson, marketing director, who will have a stake for worth £3.68 million. The company's phonecards for executives travelling overseas will be targeted at a broader market. The shares will be priced at 150p apiece.

NLC issues warning

DEEPPENING losses at a Lloyd's underwriting syndicate caused New London Capital, the corporate investment vehicle, to issue a profit warning yesterday. It told investors that consolidated underwriting profits are likely to be in line with or below the Lloyd's market average after Syndicate 657 announced a loss of 41 per cent of capacity. New London, which in December predicted that it would beat the average, had a 7.1 per cent exposure to the syndicate in 1994, the underwriting year that forms the basis for its 1996-97 results.

Lopex names new chief

SHARES of Lopex hit a three-year high as the marketing group returned record underlying profits and named Viscount Chandos as its new chairman. Operating profits rose to £3.4 million (£2.25 million) last year. But a £3.8 million provision for future losses on property rentals turned this into a loss of 2.1p a share. The dividend rises 50 per cent to 0.75p, with a final 0.45p, due May 23. Viscount Chandos, who resigned from Chrysalis last October, takes over in May. The shares rose 2p to 28p.

Paterson edges ahead

PATERSON ZOCHONIS, the international trading company behind the Imperial Leather soap brand, reported pre-tax profits of £13.97 million for the six months to November 30, up from £13.19 million previously. Earnings improved to 19.25p a share from 16.81p. The interim dividend is lifted to 5.5p (2.65p), reflecting the intention to redress the balance between interim and final payments. The company expects full-year pre-tax profits similar to the previous year's £29.17 million.

Manders holds dividend

MANDERS, the supplier of printing inks and coatings, is holding the total dividend at 11.5p a share for 1996, after reporting a fall in pre-tax profits from £11.6 million to £5.5 million. The company was affected by fierce price-cutting in the coatings and printing inks markets. Results were also adversely affected by a £1.57 million restructuring charge. Adjusted earnings fell to 10.3p a share, from 21.9p. The final dividend is unchanged at 8.4p.

Swire Pacific

"The Swire Pacific Group is in a strong position and the outlook for the Group as a whole is good."

P D A Sutch
Chairman, Swire Pacific Limited
Hong Kong, 14th March 1997

HIGHLIGHTS

Profit attributable to shareholders	US\$981M	+19%
Investment property portfolio	US\$11,595M	+41%
Net assets per share	US\$8.15	+41%
Earnings per share	US\$61.9	+19%
Dividends per share	US\$22.7	+11%

Notes:

1. Amounts per share refer to 'A' shares. Entitlements of 'B' shareholders are in proportion 1 to 5 compared with those of 'A' shareholders.
2. All the above figures have been translated from Hong Kong dollars into United States dollars at an exchange rate of US\$1 = HK\$7.80.
3. Dividends are declared in Hong Kong dollars.

BUILDING MATERIALS

CHEMICALS

DISTRIBUTORS

Earlier losses halved

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	%	PE
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES							
495 427 Allied Domecq	102	77	7	54	12		
496 428 British Distillers	102	77	2	62	7.2		
497 429 Chivas Brothers	102	77	1	41	15.5		
498 430 Diageo	102	77	1	41	15.5		
499 431 Heublein	102	77	1	41	15.5		
500 432 Heublein Corp	102	77	1	41	15.5		
501 433 Heublein Div	102	77	1	41	15.5		
502 434 Heublein Ind	102	77	1	41	15.5		
503 435 Heublein Int'l	102	77	1	41	15.5		
504 436 Heublein Int'l Inc	102	77	1	41	15.5		
505 437 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
506 438 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
507 439 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
508 440 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
509 441 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
510 442 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
511 443 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
512 444 Heublein Int'l Inc V	102	77	1	41	15.5		
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- to Human Resources Director

c. £20,000 +
attractive benefits

London Transport

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- to Human Resources Director

The job is secretary to the Director of Human Resources at London Transport. This is a busy post where you will be part of a team, working as personal secretary to the Director in a department of 350+ people. You will co-ordinate her diary, prepare papers and organise the filing system and play a high-profile role in the day-to-day management of the department. Hopefully as you get used to the systems you will deal with day-to-day matters easily and enjoy the hustle and bustle of a busy, demanding environment, where you will often need to work on your own initiative and convey an atmosphere of calm and tranquillity - even when the pressure is on and you have a hundred things to complete before lunch!

If you are an experienced secretary, with good computer skills (Microsoft Office, Excel and PowerPoint), highly developed communication and personal organisation skills and a positive attitude to work and customers, please let us know.

Initially give Sue Gardner a ring on 0171 918 4874 who will talk to you about the job. Please quote reference CDV531/E.

Closing date for applications: 26 March 1997.

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Please reply with CV to William Williams, 5 Park Place, London SW1A 1LP.

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Fax CV on 0171 723 3533 attention of David Blair

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Property finance and investment company seek capable all-rounders with good working knowledge of W&V to support team of 6, supervise junior and keep office organised. £16-18K (possibly more if some SAGE experience). Contact: Richard on 0171-409-3080 or write to me at 62 Park St, W1Y 3HQ.

Managing Director's PA Management Team Secretary Office Administrator

London SW7

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We now need to fill three key roles to complete our current phase of organisational development. We need a mature PA for our Managing Director. The ideal candidate will be able to demonstrate significant achievement in a similar role, have English as a mother tongue and an excellent level of written and spoken Swedish.

Reporting to our Managing Director is a small highly focused Management Team of four who now also require an experienced Secretary. We need a team player with initiative and excellent organisational skills to work in a fast moving, customer focused environment.

We also need an Office Administrator reporting to the Finance Manager to plan and organise the day-to-day operations of our very busy office,

working closely with our Facilities Manager, Customer Care and IT Support Groups.

The office style is a totally 'hands on, no nonsense, no politics' teamwork based approach to doing a challenging and exciting job in a calm and thoroughly professional manner. Ideal candidates will therefore be experienced, self reliant, energetic, flexible, and tenacious with a good sense of humour! Organisational skills, the ability to influence, and excellent knowledge of Microsoft Office / Windows 3.11 are taken for granted. Salaries and benefits are competitive.

Please post, fax or e-mail your CV with a covering letter stating your earnings, career aspirations and key career achievements to Telia's Response Manager, Tony Alton, quoting reference 2457 at Lansdowne, Rosedale House, Rosedale Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2SZ. Fax: 0181 332 6302. E-mail: lansdowne@telia.pipex.com

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Strictly no agencies please.

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Must have 60/100 wpm. If you enjoy working in a fast moving environment, have initiative, stamina and drive, we may have just the job for you.

Salary: £10k.
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c. £20 - 24,000

An established Corporate Finance House based in Central London requires an outgoing and experienced Office Manager to control a small professional group. Wide range of responsibilities with significant opportunity to develop career in expanding international company.

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This is a great opening to join a growing company supporting two young managers. Your day will be varied and busy, producing presentations and reports, arranging travel and accommodation. This organisation will give masses of opportunity to someone who has the ability to be proactive and use their own initiative. Skills: 50wpm/ Windows/ Excel Age: 20-30. Please call Sam Garner on 0171 390 7000

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TRUE GRADUATE ASSISTANT £18,000

UK President of High-Growth International Media Corporation needs highly motivated Assistant/ Project Co-ordinator intent on a career in Media. He offers 100% involvement - you could be attending meetings, researching into major projects, policy formulating - as part of a much wider, global Organisation. An interest in the Far East/Asia useful, must have keyboard skills and be computer literate. Age 22-25.

Moving On Up £18-20K + Fab Bens West End

Large international firm of management consultants seek senior secretaries to join their dynamic team. You will have good knowledge of Windows, combined with a strong sense of team responsibility as well as a real eye for detail and boundless enthusiasm. The job content is interesting and diverse with the opportunity to become totally involved. A minimum of 5 GCSE's at C grade and the attitude to succeed are the key. Please contact Susanna Hargreaves on 0171 434 4512.

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CHELSEA COMMUTING! £18- £20,000

End all that hassle with crowds, tubes, buses etc, and come to work in the fresh leafy streets of Chelsea and Kensington amongst their attractive houses and in their calm village atmospheres. This prestigious, privately owned Estate Agency in SW3 need a PA to organise their highly successful Head of Sales. Sense of humour and self-confidence essential! Aged 25-35. -60. No Audio.

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MEDIA RELATIONS

Accounts Assistant £20000 WC2

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MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS £18-25 meg SW1

Our client is an influential international management consultancy, a market leader with the highest standards. They need 3 exceptional admin assistants - committed, computer literate team players with flexible, 'can-do' attitudes and deadly accurate 60wpm. How do you measure up?

PLEASE CALL 0171 373 2779
JIGSAW
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EXECUTIVE SELECTION! £23,000 + Bonus

A fabulous opportunity has arisen for a PA/Administrator with at least 2 years experience to join this Int'l, Blue Chip firm of Executive Selection Consultants. Based in W1 you will work alongside 2 successful and likable Consultants - manage their diaries, coordinate meetings, put together reports, correspondence, liaise in depth with clients and candidates - anticipate their needs and as a result get totally involved. -60. Windows + Powerpoint. Age 23-28. Low secretarial content!



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You should be an experienced Consultant with a proven track record and enjoy the buzz of handling a professional team of temps. (Initially maternity cover). Benefits include profit share, P.P.V., a lovely location and a dynamic, happy environment.

Please contact Hilary Watts in confidence to discuss.

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Help!! Due to expansion we urgently need experienced Receptionists, Secretaries, PA's who would enjoy temping for our clients in the West End, Chelsea and the City. Without exception our Temporary Bookings are treated like Permanent jobs - we get you work, but work where you feel you fit in, coupled with competitive rates of pay. For more information please ring Diana Anderson.

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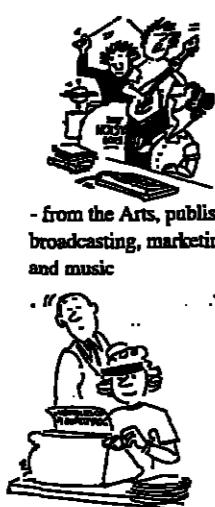
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JONATHAN WREN

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£20,000

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High levels of energy, exceptional written and verbal communication skills in conjunction with advanced Word for Windows are prerequisites. This role will be varied and will challenge even the most experienced of executives. In addition to the complex day to day management of the senior executive's life, project work and client involvement will form a large part of the job. A 'N' level education, 80/100wpm and a language are desirable.

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All applicants are equally welcome.

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REED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

PA/SECRETARY

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High profile, executive reception roles for 2 top clients exp, immaculately groomed and well spoken receptionists.

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West End

A Covert Garden Management Consultancy is looking for a highly organised administrator for a varied role. The position is split between secretarial and administrative duties and will include new business processing, maintaining a log of product information, assisting in the collation of client reports and copyediting typing. As you will be drafting your own correspondence and liaising with clients you will ideally have at least 1 year's secretarial experience and the confidence and flexibility to work in both a support role and independently. Word for Windows and good typing skills are essential, PowerPoint and experience of E-Mail would be very useful.

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Dealing with multinationals worldwide, this Director is looking for a co-ordinator to oversee support and reporting functions for their UK sales team. Duties include organising extensive foreign travel, conferences, training and campaigns. Must be available immediately with good Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

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The international blue chip company have an opening for a career receptionist. Based in prestigious Mayfair offices you will present a poised and professional image to clients and VIPs alike. Keyboard skills essential. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

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£22,000**

Total involvement and career development are offered by this prestigious Mayfair based executive search consultancy. An organised mind, professional poise and first rate administrative skills will prove invaluable. 60wpm typing essential. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

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Proactive, resourceful "thinking" PAs are needed for this large successful company. A right hand to your boss with excellent skills, you can become fully involved in his professional life. Windows essential, shorthand useful. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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As well as appointments in office hours, we'll be here between 6pm and 8pm Monday to Thursday - just come along! On Saturday 22 March, we're making appointments between 10am and 4pm and for City temps we'll be in EC4 on Monday 24 March.

Just contact Cherie Macgregor-Skinner or Rachel Huggins on 0171 408 0425. Tate, 70-71 New Bond Street, London W1Y 9DE.

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... and fabulous spectacle at the Notting Hill Carnival: we select this summer's finest nights out

Premieres and pop stars, carnivals and choruses: Gillian Maxey previews the best of the British festivals

Top festival delights of summer '97

APRIL

Chichester Theatre: A starry line-up for the Festival Theatre's summer season: Ian McShane, Stephen Beacham, Googie Withers, Maureen Lipman and the Hollywood actress Kathleen Turner. Plays include *The Admirable Crichton*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Bilbo's Spirit*, *Our Betters*, and *Divorce Me Darling*, Sandy Wilson's high-kicking sequel to *The Boyfriend*. April 19-Sept 27 (01243 781312)

MAY

Bath: Now in its 48th year. Classical, contemporary and jazz music, together with modern art, explore the theme "Resurrection". The Contemporary Music Weekend, with trail-blazing composer Iannis Xenakis, is an exciting addition, and the Clerical Medical Jazz Weekend makes a welcome return. Highlights include the Opening Night celebrations, Sir Simon Rattle, James Galway, Emma Kirkby, Steven Isserlis and an extensive Fringe festival. May 16-June 1 (01225 463362)

Beverley and East Riding: Early music bingie celebrates its tenth anniversary and new name with a musical journey through medieval North Africa, Renaissance Europe and 16th-century London. The Gabrieli Consort and Fretwork lead the way. May 1-11 (01428 884354)

BOC Covent Garden, London: Two weeks of opera and music theatre in the cultural heart of London embraces the contrasting themes of "Venetian Splendour" and "American Pizzazz". Highlights include British Youth Opera's new production of *The Condottieri*, the San Francisco music revue *Beach Babes Babylon*, and Stephen Sondheim's cult musical, *Anyone Can Whistle*. May 26-June 7 (0171 312 9922)

Brighton: Colourful international festival encompassing the anniversaries of Schubert and Brahms. Premieres include *Danton's Tod*, Gottfried von Einem's French Revolution opera, Joshua Sobol's *The Village*, and *Waiora* by Maori playwright Hone Kouka. Contem-



Schubert feted in Sheffield, Brighton and Malvern

porary and classical music, dance, literature and debate, films and exhibitions run concurrently with a programme of street theatre. May 3-25 (01273 676926)

Bury St Edmunds: Seventeen days en fée in the historic market town. Highlights include a Michael Tippett UK premiere, the world premiere of *The Rosewell Incident* by Music Theatre Wales, drama from Methane and Madness and jazz from Circa Bley. Also, poetry, films, dance street theatre, comedy and a Viennese fireworks finale. May 9-25 (01284 759505)

Chelmsford Cathedral: Chamber, choral and keyboard music, sandwiched between orchestral concerts by the Britten Sinfonia and Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Other highlights include a production of *Warchild* by National Youth Music Theatre, jazz from John Dankworth and Cleo Laine, and a fringe programme of talks, film, poetry and drama. May 7-17 (01245 359890)

Glasgow Mayfest: Citywide celebration of the arts, including music, dance, theatre, comedy, visual arts, film, magic and storytelling. Opera: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' controversial *Resurrection*. Dance: UK premieres from Compania Antonio Gades and Les Ballets Africains. Theatre: Hector Macmillan's new play; *A Greater Tomorrow* about Scots who fought in the Spanish Civil War. May 1-24 (0141 552 8444)

Glyndebourne: Six operas, 74 performances. New productions of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* (directed by Graham Vick, conducted by



Basking below the battlements: the casual fun of the vast Edinburgh Fringe — the world's biggest cultural jamboree — has spawned imitations around the country

John Eliot Gardiner in his Glyndebourne debut; and Rossini's comic opera, *Le Comte Ory* (directed by Jérôme Savary). Revivals of Britten's *Owen Wingrave*, Mozart's *Die nozze di Figaro*, Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* and Handel's *Theodora*. Tickets from £10-£14. May 16-August 24 (01273 813813)

Leeds: Music, mostly jazz, inspired by the roots and rhythms of New Orleans, Africa, South America, Russia, Germany, the West Indies and the mystery of the Far East. May 7-11 (0113 243 2491)

Malvern: Elgar in the Malvern Hills, plus Schubert and Brahms. Concerts by resident musician Tasmin Little, the Chilingarian Quartet with Raphael Wallfisch, and the New Queen's Hall Orchestra. May 30-June 7 (01684 572725)

Newbury: A fortnight of festive entertainment. Percussionist Evelyn Glennie, cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, mezzo-soprano Sarah Walker, guitarist Julian Bream, jazz from Humphrey Lyttelton. May 10-24 (01635 33421)

Perth: Festival amid breathtaking scenery, including French chamber music with pianist Pascal Rogé, Quatuor Parissi and London Winds. Artists include the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra and Helen Shapiro, while the film festival looks at "Scotland on the Silver Screen". May 22-June 1 (01738 472706)

Sheffield: The Lindsays and friends explore Schubert and Brahms at this year's Music in the Round May Festival. May 10-24 (0141 276 9922)

JUNE

Aldeburgh: Founded by Britten, the Suffolk festival celebrates its half century with two premieres by Mark-Anthony Turnage: the music theatre piece, *The Country of the Blind*, based on a story by H.G. Wells, and *Twice*. The Young People's series and festival masses. Resident baritone Donald Maxwell features in a triple bill of comic opera. Performances of Haydn's *Life on the Moon* and John Alver's music theatre piece, *My Dear Mozart*. July 11-21 (01284 453433)

City of London: St Mary-le-Bow's bells will ring out at the start of three weeks of opera, concerts, recitals, jazz, literary events, films and walks in the Square Mile. Highlights include a unique concert dramatisation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one hundred years of *Dracula* on film, choral concerts commemorating the tercentenary of St Paul's Cathedral, and the world premiere of Bernstein's *The White House Cantata*. June 13-27 (0171 377 0540)

Spitalfields, London: Music — classical, contemporary and early



Montserrat Caballé sings in Llangollen in July

Cambridge: Performing arts are the focus of this year's CamFest (June 10-July 19), while the Grassroots Festival of New Writing (June 23-July 19) and the Shakespeare Festival (June 30-end August) provide something for everyone. Early music throughout July and August. Pop in the Park (July 11) and the best in folk, blues, country and roots at the Folk Festival (July 25-27). June-August (01223 463363)

Cheltenham Music: Busy international festival incorporating classical, modern, symphony, chamber and solo recitals. An Austro-Germanic theme embraces the various anniversaries of Brahms, Schubert and Mendelssohn. Plus a Schwertsik premiere and Berlin cabaret songs. Music by Okkeshem and Poulen, early music, jazz, film and music theatre. July 5-20 (01242 237377)

Lichfield: Lesley Garrett, Melvyn Tan, the BBC Philharmonic and

Henley: Music and the arts on the banks of the Thames. Lesley Garrett and the BBC Concert Orchestra return to the floating stage. Plus jazz and humour from the Temperance Seven, the band of the Royal Air Force, laser displays, fireworks, dance bands, cabaret, living sculpture, and Last Night flagwaving with mezzo-soprano Sarah Walker. July 5-12 (01491 411353)

King's Lynn: Cultures of the world unite with the help of Emma Kirkby, the Kirov Chamber Choir, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, flamenco by candlelight and a production of *The Merchant of Venice*. July 19-August 2 (01553 773578)

Montserrat Caballé: Lesley Garrett, Melvyn Tan, the BBC Philharmonic and

Womad: Family-oriented festival of world music, workshops, arts and crafts beside the Thame in Reading. Headline acts: Burning Spear, Mory Kante, Fairtress, Ravi Shankar and Carlinhos Brown. July 25-27 (01882 99030)

York Early Music: Medieval churches, historic houses and ancient guildhalls house Britain's biggest festival of early music. The human voice is celebrated with performances of Handel's *Belsazar* by the King's Consort and Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysse* by Opera North. Also taking part, the Choir of King's College Cambridge, the BBC Singers, and Italian ensemble La Reverti in its British debut. July 4-13 (01904 658338)

Norfolk and Norwich: East Anglia's burgeoning festival of the performing arts with more than 120 events in and around Norwich celebrating the theme *My Country*. Orchestral concerts, jazz, dance, theatre, comedy — and the stage premiere of William Alwyn's opera, *Mrs Julie*. October 8-19 (01603 764764)

A guide to European festivals will appear on April 2

AUGUST

Arundel: Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* in the castle grounds and concerts in the Barons' Hall. Fireworks, jazz, family shows, folk, art gallery trail and Felicity Lott. August 22-25 (01903 583690)

Edinburgh International: Fifthtieth anniversary celebrated with a look back to the premieres and highlights of the past. Visiting artists to Scotland's capital will include the Royal Opera, San Francisco Ballet, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Bryn Terfel, Mikhail Petrenov and Steven Isserlis. Innovative theatre and outrageous stand-up in the enormous Fringe festival (Aug 10-30, 0131-226 5257), preceded by the syncopated rhythms of the Jazz and Blues fest (Aug 2-10, 0131-557 1642). International Festival August 10-30 (0131-226 4001)

Edinburgh Film: International festival featuring David Lynch's *The Highway*, a retrospective of director Edgar G. Ulmer and a new focus on documentaries. *The Graduate* is the subject of this year's popular Scene by Scene. August 10-24 (0131-228 4051)

Hereford, Three Choirs: Europe's oldest choral festival celebrates the anniversaries of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Brahms, with birthday tributes to the composers John Gardner, John Joubert and Paul Patterson. Premieres include a new choral and orchestral work by Judith Bingham and *Paradise Lost*, a new choral work based on Milton's epic poem, complemented by a lively Fringe. August 17-22 (01432 274455)

Notting Hill: Annual celebration of black culture explodes onto the streets of London amid a carnival atmosphere of music, dance and spectacular costumes. Two million spectators expected. August 24-25 (0181 964 0544)

Reading: Long-established, unadulterated rock festival with a reputation for attracting the top names from America. August 22-24 (0181 963 0940)

Venue: Four weeks of music, song and dance in North Wales. International choirs in daily competitions and evening concerts, and folk dances in colourful national costume. Montserrat Caballé, Joanna

massed American choirs mark the anniversaries of Schubert, Brahms and Mendelssohn — and the 85th anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic* (whose captain was a native of Staffordshire). July 4-13 (01543 327298)

Llangollen Eisteddfod: Six magical days of music, song and dance in North Wales. International choirs in daily competitions and evening concerts, and folk dances in colourful national costume. July 11-26 (01244 327222)

Chester Festivities: A fireworks spectacular launches 17 days of entertainment, played out in the magnificent Norman cathedral and its environs. Symphony concerts, chamber music and jazz vie with exhibitions, opera, alternative comedy and celebrity lecturers (including *Times* columnist Libby Purves).

July 4-20 (01243 785718)

Fishguard: The composer Alun Hoddinott presides over a popular mix of choral, orchestral and recital music, this year celebrating the musical genius of Schubert and Steinway. Pianist Cécile Ousset and string ensemble Quanor Parisi lead a friendly invasion from France to the Pembrokeshire coastal town and nearby St David's Cathedral.

July 24-August 2 (01348 573612)

Greenwich and Docklands: Entering its second year of international programming, the festival begins a special relationship with Barcelona with a recreation of the city's celebrated *Dies de Dansa* festival in the grounds of the Royal Naval College, and performances by pianist Alicia de Larrocha and jazz maestro Tete Montoliu. Irvine Welsh's cutting-edge theatre piece, *Headstate*, and music from the Michael Nyman Band, Jools Holland, I Fagiolini and the Academy of Ancient Music add spice to the Purves).

July 18-September 13 (0171-765 5575)

Glastonbury: The monster is back after a two-year absence

MacGregor, King's College Choir and the London Adventist Chorale drop by.

July 8-13 (01978 860236)

Phoenix: Britain's only four-day pop festival ralongs alongside Glastonbury for attracting the happening acts of the year. Seven stages of music with comedy, funfairs and a circus. July 17-20 (0181 963 0940)

Canterbury: The Royal Shakespeare Company, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Phoenix Dance Company and George Gershwin's centenary. Classical concerts in the cathedral nave and intimate recitals in the crypt. Jazz and opera in the Marlowe Theatre, world music, folk and blues in the Festival Club.

October 11-25 (01227 452853)

Chester Literature: Readers and writers come together in a carnival atmosphere for a varied programme of talks, lectures, debates, poetry readings, exhibitions and cutting-edge drama. October 10-19 (01242 227979)

Dance Umbrella, London: Contemporary dancers from Britain and abroad gather in the South Bank Centre, the Place and Riverside Studios. Workshops, dance films and meet-the-artist sessions. October 21-mid November (0181 741 5881)

Norfolk and Norwich: East Anglia's burgeoning festival of the performing arts with more than 120 events in and around Norwich celebrating the theme *My Country*. Orchestral concerts, jazz, dance, theatre, comedy — and the stage premiere of William Alwyn's opera, *Mrs Julie*. October 8-19 (01603 764764)

A guide to European festivals will appear on April 2



■ VISUAL ART
Vermeer and I: David Hockney talks about the influences behind his new flower paintings



■ MUSIC 1
Zubin Mehta conducts an uneasy concert to mark the golden jubilee of Indian independence

THE TIMES ARTS



■ MUSIC 2
... while Mark Wigglesworth steers his Welsh orchestra through an exhilarating Stravinsky night



■ TOMORROW
How does Star Wars rate, second time round? Read Geoff Brown on this week's film releases

How does his garden grow?

David Hockney tells Richard Cork why his forthcoming London show will be full of exuberant flower paintings

By choosing flowers as the main subject of his new London exhibition, David Hockney is impishly aware that he offers us a challenge. "I know that there's a prejudice against flower paintings," he says, pacing around the spectacular skylit room at the Anny Juda gallery for a trial hang of his luminous canvases. "I also realise that artists have rarely made memorable pictures of flowers, but I chose them as a theme to cheer myself up." Besides, he likes the idea of breaking all those taboos about chocolate-box prettiness. "My first idea for the show's title," he says with an anarchic grin, "was *F*** You, There's All Flowers*."

Despite Damien Hirst's ever-growing notoriety, Hockney remains Britain's best-known and most popular contemporary artist. Strangely, though, he has not staged a large exhibition of new work on a London dealer's premises for 20 years. As if to compensate, the Juda show is his biggest ever in a commercial gallery: more than 30 small portraits will be hung in the room below the display of 18 still-life paintings. But why has there been such a long gap?

"Well, I've spent a lot of time working in the theatre, and I don't do enough painting," he explains. Hockney comes over to England from his Californian home about four times a year, but principally to stay with his family in Yorkshire. Portraits of his relatives will be included in the exhibition, testifying to his belief that sitters should already have familiar faces: "If you don't know them, you don't know enough about them".

His family relationships are especially close. "My mother's 96, and she can hear better than I can," he says wryly, saddled now with hearing aids in both ears. But he looks sprightly. Approaching his 60th birthday in July, he claims to "feel about 30". And he shifts incessantly in his chair during our conversation, smoking Camel cigarettes while forever thrusting out his arms with instinctive theatricality to reinforce the flow of words.

The starting-point for the flower pictures, all painted in a great rush of enthusiasm last year, was a visit to the Vermeer retrospective at The Hague. "I was incredibly impressed," he recalls. "Although Vermeer's colour is more than 300 years old, it'll last longer than MGM's. I was amazed at how dull everything

seemed when you came out of the show." So the often startling brightness of Hockney's flower pictures can be seen, in part at least, as his exhilarated and competitive response to Vermeer's radiance.

They are also, perhaps more significantly, the outcome of his desire to scrutinise the thing itself. In the past, he has often worked from photographs or his own imagination. But this time he worked only from life. "I've always had flowers in the house," he says. "And since Los Angeles is semi-tropical, even the

sunflowers in a collector's house was like walking into a flower. In a way, everything is an abstraction if it's a picture."

Over the past few years, Hockney has pushed his own painting in an abstract direction. But these limp flower pictures mark a change, and he clearly revelled in the particular character of the species he chose.

The grand sunflowers canvas was inspired by a gift from his friend Jonathan Silver, whose Salts Mill gallery in Bradford has a permanent display of Hockney's work. "Jonathan sent me all these sunflowers for my birthday," he remembers with a grin.

Taking on such a subject meant, inevitably, risking comparison with Van Gogh. But Hockney did not feel daunted. On the contrary: he relished the challenge posed by the blazing sunflowers. "Yellow is not a common colour in painting," he says, "but Van Gogh said it was the colour of hope. People are timid about colour, they don't like it."

Hockney manifestly does. He basks in the brazen, festive impact of the flowers in these unfettered canvases. But he is conscious, too, of their ability to symbolise transience. Even the most innocuous of 17th-century Dutch flower paintings can easily turn out to be a memento mori. And Hockney, when pressed, admits that "I'm interested in fragility as a subject". He found himself painting the flowers fast, in order to ensure that they did not wither and perish before he had finished. "Every single day they altered, and I even saw a cactus growing when I included it in a still life with lemons." Change fascinates him as much as space, and the speed with which Hockney worked undoubtedly contributes to the pictures' liveliness. "Flowers shoot upwards in great celebratory bursts," he says eagerly, waving his hands in the air as if to mimic the eruptive impact of firework display.

He has, of course, painted flowers before: one of his most-reproduced works, *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, includes a particularly appealing vase of white lilies on a low table. But never before has Hockney devoted such single-minded energy to the subject, nor produced so many flower paintings in a sustained bout of exploration.

He finds working alone in the studio is a tonic after spending a major part of his time on demanding, and often exhausting, opera designs. "I've finished with the

most exotic ones are easy to get hold of. But for these paintings, I arranged them carefully in the studio. By playing with the lighting, I can make the shadows go anywhere."

Viewed from a distance, the results look highly illusionistic. Nothing could appear more palpable than the 30 sunflowers filling one of the largest canvases with their fierce chromatic brilliance. Seen close to, though, the paint becomes surprisingly thin and anti-descriptive, almost to the point of abstraction. Hockney is well aware of the paradox, and it fascinates him. "Friends said: 'When you paint so close to the picture, how do you know what it'll look like from way back?'" The answer is that Hockney is increasingly obsessed with the spatial experience of moving around his big studio. "The real subject of these flower paintings is space," he insists. "I react to something in space, to the way my eyes dance around the flowers."

Since we are sitting next to a small Mondrian painting of 1927, utterly rigorous in its austere pictorial structure, I ask Hockney how much he responds to thoroughgoing abstract art. "I found the Ad Reinhardt exhibition in New York incredibly beautiful," he says, "and finding a roomful of Ellsworth Kelly's paint-

ings now," he says. "It's an ephemeral art, making me give months and months to something that only lasts a few hours. In the theatre, collaboration means compromise, and I'd rather get back to painting on my own. I take out my hearing aids and work in complete silence."

He only stopped painting flowers

last year because his opera commitments obliged him to visit Australia for two major productions. "But when I return to California now, I shall just go back to flowers again. For me, it's a terrific subject."

Does the Juda exhibition mean that he is becoming more involved with London, or will he spend the rest of his life in the Californian sun?

"I'm a bit claustrophobic," he confesses, "and that's why I live in LA. I like big, white, open spaces. I love the vastness of the American West. England is small, and I've been abroad too long to come back now."

• David Hockney's exhibition, *Flowers, Faces and Spaces*, opens at Anny Juda Fine Art, 23 Dering Street, London W1 (0171-839 7578) on May 1

CONCERTS: Shankars with sitars and Mahler makes three; celebrating Stravinsky; new baritone on the block

Bombay to Vienna

LSO/Mehta
Barbican

Indian independence may be sufficiently ancient history for its 50th anniversary to be celebrated, as it was by the London Symphony Orchestra on Monday night, without political embarrassment. Whether traces of cultural hegemony can be so easily masked is another matter.

The evening was a festive one, presenting, in the first half, works by Indian composers, and in the second half Mahler's First Symphony, all conducted by the Bombay-born Zubin Mehta. Ravi Shankar, the former guru now nearly 77, appeared with his 15-year-old daughter Anoushka in his own Concerto No 1 for Sitar and Orchestra of 1971, and it was here that the cultural mix seemed most problematic. When Shankar gives himself the space to ruminante, unimpeded by orchestral intermissions, he is at his most evocative, but when he has the strings racing around like headless chickens, the result is anonymous.

The third movement (*Raga Adanai*) begins atmospherically with horns and upper strings, before lower strings and wind sustain quiet octaves under a soloist's solo. This minimal interaction works well, but all too soon we are back to the characteristic racing figures. With the final movement come lively antiphonal exchanges and passages of invigorating complexity for the two sitars and drums.

The precise role of Miss Shankar — her part rarely seemed independent — was unclear, but the sight of revered icon and glamorous daughter seated together on the floor brought them a standing ovation.

SUNDAY'S BBC National Orchestra of Wales concert was presented under the banner of two festivals, Stravinsky: Rites of Spring and Sound the Century, so it was fitting that the programme felt so festive. It began with *Fireworks* and ended with *Petrushka*, two popular pieces which framed a pair of Stravinsky's less frequently played scores.

The programming was thoughtful. All the music came from the first two decades of Stravinsky's long, creative life, yet it showed how even early on the composer never ceased to reinvent himself. Nowhere was this better shown than in *Apollo*, perhaps the most Neo-Classical of his works. It is scored for strings alone and written in a wistful musical language that suggests Elgar with a few "wrong notes" thrown in. Mark

SUCH is the Wigmore Hall's voracious appetite for Lieder that the mere whisper of a new young baritone is enough to send its audience into a frenzy of expectation. So the burden on 24-year-old Stephan Genz was a heavy one in this recital of Schumann and Wolf. This may have accounted for the eagerness to please, which was at its most acute in the opening Schumann settings of Heinrich Heine's poetry.

The voice is an open, light baritone; but its presence was often masked by that of Genz as performer. Like a mime artist, his eyes, face, and entire body language vividly communicated each poem's bright tableau. Yet here, and in the Heine *Liederkreis* which followed, this semi-staging became trying, and too few phrases were really sung

Too full facial

Genz/McGreevy
Wigmore Hall

through. In short, one longed for more voice, less face.

Throughout, Roger Vignoles' piano playing was thrillingly eloquent. In order to match it, Genz will have to calm down a little, breathe more deeply, take a step away from his teachers and simply allow his voice to sing more.

Geraldine McGreevy, winner of the 1996 Kathleen Ferrier Award, also made a

somewhat tentative debut at the Wigmore Hall; but for almost diametrically opposite reasons. In a highly imaginative programme, which included music by Rousset, Warlock, Hugh Wood, Schumann and Strauss, McGreevy revealed a beautifully groomed, sweetly melodic soprano, but a somewhat bland performance.

McGreevy had a natural talent for the French repertoire, but for the disturbed doppelgänger of Hugh Wood's Robert Graves setting, *The Foreboding*, the voice has yet to discover its shadow side. McGreevy, unlike Genz, needs to work harder at working her audience, and at focusing her responses more intensely on text and subtlety.

HILARY FINCH

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when matching the sly eroticism of Pushkin's verses. Sarah Walker was the soloist, completely inside the idiom. *Fireworks*, a compact, exhilarating score dating from just two years after these songs, was the evening's only disappointment: all the colours were there, but the playing could have been tauter.

But there was no lack of brilliance or tightness in Wigglesworth's account of *Petrushka*. His conducting had both fluidity and precision: solos took on expressive freedom, and the orchestra revelled in the big tunes. Street-cries and folksongs jostled each other in this picture of wintry St Petersburg, but this was no neo-folksy interpretation: in its bracing, spiky way it showed that *The Rite of Spring* was just around the corner.

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THEATRE
Satire of a very gentle variety comes in *Much Revue About Nothing*



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Markus Stenz conducts Henze's opera, *Elegy for Young Lovers*

VENUE: Tonight at the Queen Elizabeth Hall



CHOICE 2
Evelyn Glennie performs a pair of concertos for percussion

VENUE: Symphony Hall, Birmingham, tonight



CHOICE 3
Pinter's *The Caretaker* is revived in Southampton

VENUE: Opens tonight at the Nuffield Theatre

THEATRE: Satire without a sting; bleak drama in Edinburgh; Oirish mayhem at the Tricycle

To the weak that was

I ntimiate revue died around 1962. Maybe it was because *Beyond the Fringe* made every other stab at satire seem insipid, or because the bright new comics opted to take their sketches to *That Was the Week That Was*, or because cute little songs came to strike most people as passé. And I must say that, fun though it mostly is, *Much Revue About Nothing*, the compilation of bits and bobs from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s that Phillip George is staging at the King's Head, does not leave me avid

Much Revue About Nothing

King's Head, N1

for a revival of the genre. It is sometimes hard to feel enthusiasm when numbers are maladroit, mocking the maladroit, or not really maladroit at all.

There is only one wholly spoken item, a slightly surreal sketch by Michael Bentine in which a murderous French husband mistakes the English translator in his living room for his wife's lover. Otherwise the evening consists of songs by composers and lyricists ranging from Julian (*Salad Days*) Slade through Vivian (*Spread a Little Happiness*) Ellis to Peter Cook. When a number about an old music-hall trouper who won over his audiences by telling them about his bad hip evolves into a woebegone send-up of banally upbeat songs ("Take a tip and you'll be glad; if you're happy you'll never be sad"), you hardly need to glaze at the programme to identify the



Pearly king and queen Susie Blake and Tony Whittle in *Much Revue About Nothing* at the King's Head

writer. That's Cook in his best funny glam mode.

Only two songs retain much bite. Sheldon Harnick's well-known *Merry Miniver* — "The Italians hate the Dutch, and I don't like anyone very much" — would make a good signature tune for an era of paranoid nation-states with frightening weaponry at their disposal. Sandy (*The Boy Friend*) Wilson's *True Blue Love Song* is even more topical, though it presumably comes from the late Macmillan period. "Cocktails at seven, God's in his heaven," sings a Bentinean belle to her

peach shattered as the womenicker, pull together and reveal their scars, each horror story worse than the last. All the while they live in fear of that dreaded knock on the door.

Although they are never seen on stage, it is men who dominate *Refuge*, from the mutilating doctor who sends Beth flowers to the wheedling telephone calls that prompt Carolanne to scuttle home, to Sadie slapping on her warpaint to go on the pull.

It would be unkind to suggest that *Refuge* wins its Peggy Ramsay award for worthiness alone, for there is much to command it, but as drama it has its failings. For all it addresses the awfulness of the women's situations and how the children suffer too, the first act of Gerda Stevenson's patchily acted production falls back on stereotypes and on aphorisms dressed up as dialogue. Only in the second act, when more narrative thrust comes into play, do matters improve.

Refuge is a cry of anguish at the results of domestic suffering, and although Paisley is not so naive as to offer instant solutions to a complex social ill, never once does the play attempt to get to the root of things and ask a very pertinent question. Why?

NEIL COOPER

Barmy blarney army

"I Doubt It" Says Pauline Trickeye

JON KENNY and Pai Shortt, aka the D'Unbelievables, left perfectly reasonable jobs as writers and performers to impersonate a small galaxy of provincial Irish characters. The result has been routine chaos in the foyers and stalls of respectable theatres across the UK. For their last show, *One Hell Of A Do*, set on the eve and morning of a village wedding, the two comedians hauled half the audience out of their seats to act as bride, groom, family, guests and gatecrashers — an exhilarating piece of large-scale impro.

Much the same happens in *"I Doubt It"*. Says Pauline, a farce in which the locals of Glengoyl village gear up for their annual gala. With an array of wigs and unfeasibly large ears, the D'Unbelievables seamlessly work the dangerous gap between script and audience-baiting in their various guises as gossips, village idiots and self-important dignitaries.

There are some wonderful creations:

clerk who loves the cha-cha-cha, another involving "two dainty bookends holding up dirty books".

But when they sang of the delights of April in Fairbanks, Alaska, or the joy of being very, very moderately in love, or when they satisfactorily launched into a number called *Oh Don't You Hate It When They Make You Sing Along*, I found myself drawn into the spirit of the thing. There are rewards here for nostalgia freaks — and for those who find nostalgia freakish.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

the bald-headed teacher in his flared brown suit, orange shirt leaking through his zipper, ostentatiously picking his nose while giving notes to "young Mahoney" in the third row; the grizzled hurley coach who exhorts his team to come back with the blood of the opposition — never mind that they are all under 14.

But there is a flip side to all this local colour. The strident manipulation can look as themed and fake as Oirish bars. Even the thick brogue sounds suspiciously calculated at times, and the sense of 100-mile-an-hour forced entertainment can be fitfully tedious.

It is in their running commentary with the audience, and the incidentals, that the duo earn their keep. What they send up brilliantly are the quirks of Irish parochial life: the 18 pairs of shoes that have to be cleaned on Sunday morning, the announcement that the six o'clock bus for the gala will leave at "seven thirty sharp". If they didn't feel the compulsion to clown it quite so hard, lot of this would be positively lyrical.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

DOMESTIC violence is all too common and all too well-hidden — as Janet Paisley's award-winning play, presented on tour by the Stellar Quines company, makes admirably clear. *Set Inside a soulless "safe house"*, *Refuge* thrusts a quartet of disparate survivors somewhat catastrophically together. Ageing Agnes never goes out; Carolanne sits looking spick and span; Sadie calls a spade a spade, especially where her teenaged son Gordon is concerned. All are watched over by Maggie, a well-meaning if confused care worker representing the drained resources of a starved social welfare system.

Into this raging calm is brought Beth, so traumatised by her suffering that she can barely talk. During the next two hours, the centre's uneasy

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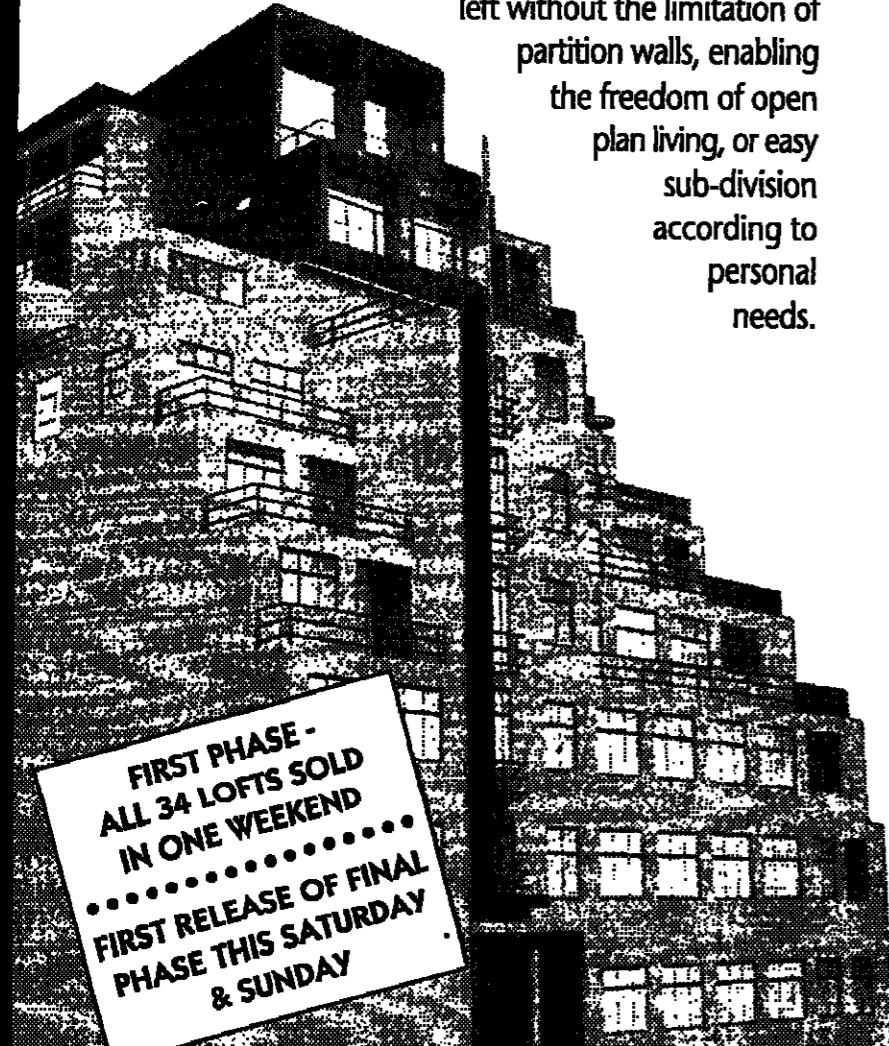
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With the general election fixed for May 1, we asked the three major parties to outline their policies for the future of Britain's housing

Our plans for the roof over your head

THE LABOUR PARTY

By NICK RAYNSFORD, MP
HOUSING SPOKESMAN



Current housing policies and programmes are hopelessly inadequate. A new approach is called for. In Labour's view there are four overriding priorities. First, we must learn the lessons of the 1980s. At that time all too many people overstretched themselves, believing that once they got their foot on the bottom step of the housing market, the escalator would carry them up to greater personal wealth. They made a terrible mistake and paid a very heavy price for it.

While house prices may rise ahead of general inflation for a year or two as we come out of recession, it is not realistic to expect substantial year-on-year increases in house prices while general inflation is held to 2 per cent or lower.

We also need to take steps to protect homeowners from the mis-selling of mortgages and related products, from other abuses in the market and from the risk of unnecessary repossessions. Our proposals for tackling the re-emerging problem of gazingumping have been widely welcomed, as have our plans for leasehold reform. Our flexible tenure proposals will both help people on modest incomes to progress by stages towards owner-occupation and assist others who, as a result of changing financial circumstance, might otherwise face the loss of their homes.

Labour offers a package of reforms to help to restore stability in the housing market and to provide new opportunities and safeguards for homeowners. At the same time we will revive the provision of social housing through local authorities, housing associations and new partnerships. This is the second key objective. We will release, on a phased basis, the receipts which councils have obtained from selling land and housing but which they are currently prevented from spending.

It must make sense to put these capital receipts back to use, building homes for the homeless and renovating run-down estates and, in the process, helping to generate jobs in the construction industry.

Thirdly, to increase flexibility in the market and opportunities for people to move areas, we will encourage a revival in good quality private-rented accommodation. We support housing investment trusts as a mechanism for increasing

institutional investment in private renting and will be looking closely at how we can help such bodies to develop in the years ahead.

We also need to break down the growing polarisation in housing which has created concentrations of poverty and deprivation in certain parts of our country. Indeed, measures to tackle unemployment, crime and vandalism are equally essential. But housing policies play a vital part. We must ensure that new developments provide opportunities for people to rent or to buy without undue segregation between the tenures.

We must also ensure that rent and benefit policies make it possible for people to get off benefit and into work. Helping to build strong and mixed communities is a vital part of a new housing policy.

Finally, we must tackle the backlog of poor condition properties in all tenures. New public/private partnership can help to bring private investment into areas of older, unmodernised council housing. A new approach towards home renovation policy can ensure that public money is used more effectively to lever in additional private investment and make it possible to develop strategic area-based renovation programmes.

A national licensing scheme for multi-occupied houses will help to raise standards in this sub-section of the market where the worst conditions are to be found, and at the same time reduce the tragic loss of life through fires and carbon monoxide poisoning in such premises.

Our new environmental task force will help to tackle the problem of hard-to-heat properties and in the process enable elderly people on low incomes to enjoy affordable warmth in the winter months.

WHERE I LIVE

I LIVE with my wife and three daughters in my constituency of Greenwich. Nick Raynsford writes. We have a comfortable house with plenty of space for us and our three cats. It is our only home. One of the great benefits of representing a London constituency is that one does not need to split one's life between separate London and constituency homes.

Our home is important to us and is a focus for a lot of activity. My wife, Anne, is a keen gardener and has spent much of the past four years transforming the garden. She and I share a study where we can work without getting under each other's feet.

I am very conscious of how lucky we are to have such a lovely home. It is a constant reminder of the benefit which people derive from having a secure base. It is one of my strongest political ambitions to ensure that every member of society has that prospect too.

Most MPs make nice comments about their constituencies but I can truly say, with hand on heart, that Greenwich is a wonderful place to live. Tourists come to see the historic buildings and will come in even larger numbers to the Millennium Exhibition in three years' time. But Greenwich is not a museum. It is a genuine community and we are very proud and happy to live here.

The proposals we are putting forward are based on flexibility, to allow local authorities and developers to make the right decisions about how much new social housing is needed, and how to finance it.

Our approach dictates that prevention is more efficient than treatment. Since homelessness is such a problem, it is surely wise to ensure that fewer people are being made homeless in the first place.

In the house price collapse of the early 1990s, a third of a million people lost their homes. Our housing policy addresses this by proposing to phase out universal mortgage interest tax relief for first-time buyers and replace it with a means-tested mortgage benefit, which would allow full payment of mortgage interest (up to a ceiling) for families on income support and low incomes. This saves the cost of rehousing evicted families and paying housing benefit for private-rented accommodation.

As far as the private-rented sector is concerned, it seems that the present Government is preparing to put more of a burden upon it than it can possibly bear. The new changes in housing benefit will mean that more and more single benefit claimants will be seeking private sector lettings. The Government has done little or no research into the amount of quality accommodation available. These benefit restrictions need to be reversed.

In terms of new social housing, we propose to remove restrictions on local government and give it the freedom to invest more in social housing. We want to give local authorities the opportunity to invest by phasing the release of capital receipts according to the needs of individual areas. At the



The two faces of Britain's housing stock: the private residence and the run-down council estate



THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

By DIANA MADDOCK, MP
HOUSING SPOKESWOMAN



Liberal Democrat policies for housing are based on our recognition of the diversity of people's needs. Not everyone wants to own their own home, and housing provision has to take into account variations in demand and cost.

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In terms of new social housing, we propose to remove restrictions on local government and give it the freedom to invest more in social housing. We want to give local authorities the opportunity to invest by phasing the release of capital receipts according to the needs of individual areas. At the

same time we want radically to reform the way local authorities can raise the money to invest in housing.

By adopting the General Government Finance Deficit as the main measure of public borrowing, we would allow public accounts to show the true value of investment in homes, investment which saves money by taking families out of expensive temporary accommodation. This would also allow local authorities to set up housing corporations which could raise money through loans and investment.

We favour investment in bricks and mortar rather than expensive benefit subsidies — we've not forgotten that the cost of housing

benefit has soared from £4 billion to £10 billion in ten years.

There is much we can do to ensure that existing housing stock is used effectively. It seems scandalous that there are 700,000 empty properties in England and Wales.

Research estimates that around 125,000 empty homes could be refurbished for less than £5,000 each. Under Liberal Democrat housing policies, local authorities could bring into use any property left empty without reasonable cause for more than 12 months.

We favour investment in bricks and mortar rather than expensive benefit subsidies — we've not forgotten that the cost of housing

classed as unfit for habitation.

There is progress to be made in energy saving: my own Home Energy Conservation Act, which became law in 1995, went some way to ensuring that new and existing homes could be energy-efficient. Liberal Democrats are also advancing reducing VAT rating of energy-saving building materials.

Tenants should have the power to make decisions on serious matters such as competitive tendering. We are particularly concerned at new DoE proposals to award housing investment money only where local authorities have put in place a plan for transfer of social housing to the private sector.

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

By DAVID CURRY,
HOUSING MINISTER



The most important challenge for the next government will be to combine a competitive economy with the delivery of effective but affordable welfare in the broadest sense. We have spelled out how we will address this need in pension provision and care of the elderly and are already delivering these policies in housing. The heart of our policy is:

- A real choice of tenure to provide a mobile workforce and meet individual needs.
- Sustainable home ownership.
- Bringing new partners into social housing in recognition of the reality (however unpalatable) that no government is going to revert to large-scale public financing and subsidised housing, and addressing the problems of inner-city estates by bringing housing and regeneration policies together.

Over the past 18 years we have given millions the chance to buy a home for the first time in their lives. We have given council and some housing association tenants the right to buy their home at a discount. More than two million tenants have bought their homes since 1979. 1.7 million of them thanks to our Right to Buy policy.

The new landlord buys the stock on the basis that it remains as social housing with sub-market rents. They can use private money to improve homes without increasing public spending and taxes. Transfers take place only with the consent of tenants.

The Housing Act 1996 enables councils to transfer their stock to a wider range of landlords, such as local housing companies which offer citizens the chance to retain an interest in the stock.

This year's Budget contained a number of measures which make transfer even more attractive, including a three-year holiday from the LSVT receipts levy (local authorities were required to pay the Exchequer 20 per cent of what was left of any receipt arising from a transfer after any outstanding debt on the stock had been repaid) and more money for our Estates Renewal Challenge Fund.

Given the constraints on public expenditure across the developed world, transfers are the best way of getting more investment in the public sector stock.

Last, but not least, we are helping those in the greatest need. Between April 1990 and March 1996 we spent more than £180 million under the Rough Sleepers Initiative. As a result, the number of people sleeping on the streets of central London has fallen from more than 1,000 to under 200. We are continuing the scheme in central London and extending it to other areas.

WHERE I LIVE

I LIVE in a 19th-century Victorian farmhouse — without the farm, David Curry writes. A very plain yellow Cambridgeshire brick cube, it was the sort of place my wife always said she could "do something with".

The "something" has been to add terraces, an open porch (replacing a sort of dog kennel of a tunnel) and shutters — my wife is French.

We've converted the bit of cereal field attached to the house into a garden (the first year the farmer managed to harvest the hedge as well as the wheat, including a vegetable garden where I fight a permanent war to defend it from being used by my father as an "overflow" for plants surplus to the flower borders).

I love two things about the house. Inside, its orientation makes it very luminous. Outside, when I get home from London the air is sweet and soft and, at times, rich with the scent of laburnum and mahonia. The cycle of the garden, made up of the predictable seasons each punctuated by a thousand surprises (not all happy surprises), makes a necessary therapy for the conflicts of politics.

But therapy is not relaxation — a garden is unremittingly demanding. It is the energy spent, not the energy saved, which is the greatest pleasure.

For sale: Major's wartime haven

Eve-Ann Prentice on a humble terraced cottage with an intriguing history

Just weeks before John Major faces the possible upheaval of finding a new house, the Norfolk cottage which was his evacuation home during the war has gone on sale.

The 15-month-old future Prime Minister was taken to the mid-terraced cottage in the remote village of Saham Toney, near the market town of Watton, by his mother and father after a doodlebug flying bomb exploded uncomfortably close to the Major family's home in Brixton and sent shards of glass flying into his cot just seconds after the infant had been lying in it.

John Major was probably too young to form vivid memories of his time at the four-bedroom cottage, which went on sale last week. But his elder brother, Terry Major-Ball, recalls the future Prime Minister being the subject of intense interest among some German prisoners of war staying in the village when they tried to teach the toddler the Nazi salute. In his book, *Major Major*,

Major-Ball writes: "That was the last straw. My mother Gwen flew at them and a group of English and German NCOs came to see what the fuss was about. They could not apologise enough. They reported the matter and said it would never happen again. In fact, we did not see any more prisoners."

The Majors took refuge in Norfolk in July 1944, when the aerial bombardment of the Blitz had ended but Londoners were being terrorised by doodlebugs and V2s — known as "flying gas mains" because the explosions caused by them were ascribed by the Government to gas main blasts. The Majors' next-door neighbours in London, who had earlier fled the Blitz to stay with relatives in Saham Toney, helped the future PM's family to find

accommodation in the village. The Majors stayed until April 1945, but kept a link with Saham Toney when John Major's sister Pat took a ginger cat, which she named Saham, back to London.

Present-day villagers in Saham Toney were said to be unaware of the link with Mr Major until Terry Major-Ball's book was published last year.

Audrey Pickering, whose family lived in the Majors' wartime refuge since the early 1960s, has put the house on the market for £55,000. She said yesterday: "I thought they were pulling my leg when I was first told John Major had lived here. Then his brother came here, and he was a very nice man. Personally, I think John seems very nice, too, and I don't think he should be blamed for everything."

Mrs Pickering has lived in the



John Major's home as a toddler: it was here that German prisoners tried to teach him the Nazi salute

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 19 1997

RACING: O'SULLEVEAN FEATURED IN DOCUMENTARY TO MARK 150TH AINTREE SHOWPIECE

BY JULIAN MUSCAT

PETER O'SULLEVAN, the BBC racing commentator preparing to call his fifth Grand National, is to feature prominently in the build-up to the historic steeplechase on April 5.

Staff at the *Grandstand* programme, which commences at 12.15 on the big day, are compiling a feature on O'Sullivan's Grand National scrapbook in what will almost certainly be his last commentary on the great race. It has been O'Sullivan's long-held ambition to complete 50 years behind the microphone at Aintree.

"It will be a big story on a big occasion," Dave Gordon, editor of *Grandstand*, said yesterday. "The piece with

Tony McCoy will be sidelined for ten days after being knocked unconscious when falling from Strong Tel in the last race at Uttoxeter yesterday.

Peter is one of a number of ideas we have to celebrate the 150th running of the Grand National. There are so many offbeat stories to choose from but Peter's achievement will be recognised." Additionally, the Aintree executive will unveil a bust of O'Sullivan on the course on Grand National day.

Known as "The Voice of Racing" for his mastery of the art, O'Sullivan spoke yesterday of the immense preparation required to commentate on one of the most unpredictable of sporting events. The thought of it filled him with terror. It was with gratitude, he said, that he could reflect on his close and lengthy association with the unique steeplechase.

Should Time For A Run prevail a fortnight on Saturday, a different kind of gratitude will be felt by an anonymous punter who laid



Aldaniti and Champion sail over Becher's Brook on their way to a famous victory in the 1981 Grand National

out £21,800 on the Irish-trained horse. The man, who walked into a William Hill betting shop in London with the cash yesterday, staked £10,000 at 25-1 and £10,000 at 20-1, paying tax on both bets. He stands to collect £450,000.

The BBC is also planning to increase its coverage of the three-day fixture, which commences on April 3. In addition to the daily live broadcasts, there will be a 25-minute highlights package on Saturday evening to round up the day's events. And to commemorate the 150th running, the corporation is to screen a 50-minute documentary, *Grand National Tales*, pro-

grammed for 10.45pm on April 1.

The sheer wealth of the BBC archives allows Desmond Lynam — who will front the Grand National broadcast from Aintree for the thirteenth time — to indulge in a narrative embracing heartbreak and nostalgia in equal measure.

The programme, more than a year in the making, does not dwell on the legend of Red Rum, as have so many previous portraits of the National. Red Rum is given his due, of course, but the making of *Grand National Tales* is its own, unearthing of the unusual; of a bewitched solicitor who can

recite all the fallers at every fence for the last 25 years; of a gaggle of giggling Singapore nightclub hostesses who make the annual pilgrimage; and of the man who for years interloped with jockeys leaving the weighing-room — pausing only to smile at the cameras.

"My personal favourite was Bob Champion's victory on Aldaniti in 1981," recalled Lynam, in London yesterday for a private screening of the documentary. "On radio the previous year we had Bob as our pundit. To be honest, we only asked him to try and cheer him up. Evidence of his cancer was all over him and

we never thought he'd be with us 12 months later. We were all in tears — I remember not being able to talk when I was supposed to."

Richard and Mark Pitman — father and son who, 18 years apart, were touched off in remarkably similar circumstances aboard Crisp and Garrison Savannah respectively — relieve their nightmares with a light touch. And the sequence of Mark Pitman's then-girlfriend, as she watched Garrison Savannah tire up that daunting run-in, vividly illustrates just how fine is the line between victory and defeat in the world's most famous steeplechase.

Bob Champion's victory on Aldaniti in 1981, recalled Lynam, in London yesterday for a private screening of the documentary. "On radio the previous year we had Bob as our pundit. To be honest, we only asked him to try and cheer him up. Evidence of his cancer was all over him and

The Grey Monk eyes Fairyhouse

FROM RICHARD EVANS IN DUBLIN

WITH Imperial Call and Unbridled Missile unlikely to run, The Grey Monk is set to lead the weights and lead a formidable British challenge for the Jameson Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse on Easter Monday.

Only four British-trained horses have won the race since it was first run in 1870, but yesterday's publication of the weights for the £100,000-added event saw no less than 17 British entries, including Gordon Richards' exciting chaser, who bypassed the Cheltenham Festival because of fast ground.

"The Grey Monk is an intended runner, provided the ground is okay," the Grey-stoke trainer said yesterday. "Twelve stone is not ideal but he is in great form."

David Nicholson has entered both Percy Smollett,

who should appreciate the right-handed Fairyhouse circuit, and St Melion Fairway. Both are intended runners if there is decent ground.

Seven Towers, winner of the Midlands Grand National on Saturday, has been pencilled in along with Sister Stephannie, who finished third in the Uttoxeter race.

Mary Revelley, trainer of Seven Towers, said: "The horse will run only if it is soft because three miles five furlongs would not be a sufficient test otherwise."

Apart from the Irish National, another 20 British-trained horses are entered at the three-day meeting. Sparky Gayle, the Cathcart Chase winner, and Squire Silk, runner-up in the Arkle, could take on Dorans Prince, third in the Cheltenham Gold Cup, in the Power Gold Cup.

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RUGBY UNION

RFU denies threat to five nations' tournament

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ENGLAND'S five nations' championship may be over but the wrangling of the off-field continues as intensely as ever, thanks to a whispering campaign that will only add to the season-long impression of a governing body at odds with itself. The target now has become Tony Hall, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) secretary, and a small number of leading officials.

John Richardson, the RFU president, found himself forced yesterday to defend his union's position regarding the future of the championship, in the face of accusations by Fran Cotton that England and France seek an alliance with the leading southern-hemisphere nations. Such comments, Richardson said, "defy belief and leave us to query his [Cotton's] motives".

Cotton, who will manage the British Isles in South Africa this summer, has been a regular contributor to the political debate in England over the past 15 months — a large representative of the small man, one might say. He claims that Hall has misled the RFU membership over details of the television contract with BSkyB (the satellite broadcasting company part-owned by News International, owner of *The Times*), and that elements of the union's inner sanctum seek to break up the five nations' tournament.

"We have never expressed any wish to withdraw from the five nations'," Richardson said. "Indeed, only last September, it cost us considerable money to settle with the other countries regarding TV rights in order to stay in. We have always said that the five nations' vital to us. It is an integral part of rugby."

"We have also said that, in order to compete with the best in the world, we must play the best. That is what we are doing before Christmas. We have fixtures with South Africa, Australia and New Zealand in that period, as well as playing Australia in Sydney in

July. While we wish for regular fixtures with the southern-hemisphere countries, we remain absolutely committed to the five nations."

Bernard Lapasset, Richard- son's opposite number in France, was equally surprised by Cotton's claims. "We rate the five nations' tournament very highly," Lapasset said, from a position of some influence given that France had just achieved the grand slam for only the fifth time in their history.

Neither country would dismiss the amalgam of social, political and sporting history that makes the five nations' the attractive commodity that it is.

At the same time, any self-respecting union must look beyond the confines of Europe to elevate its own standards, while acknowledging that the world of international rugby is not so large — in terms of quality — that traditional powers can be ignored if their playing standards have slipped, temporarily or otherwise.

In fact, the rugby globe became substantially larger yesterday with the addition of China as the 76th member of the International Rugby Football Board (IRFB). The Chinese Rugby Football Association received its certificate of membership in Hong Kong. Technical staff from the Hong Kong Rugby Union have made a substantial input to the development, though their primary concerns this week will be for the success of the second Rugby World Cup sevens tournament this weekend. Hong Kong seek to become the permanent home for the tournament, building on the success of their own annual tournament, but face a bid from Ireland to host the 2001 competition.

England are defending the title they won at Murrayfield in 1993. Tim Rodber will captain the side after the withdrawal of Lawrence Dallaglio with illness.

An Eagle House player breaks clear in the group C match against St Andrew's in the Preparatory Schools tournament

Canford triumph at first attempt

CANFORD cast off their reputation as a hockey-playing school to win the Festival tournament at the Rosslyn Park Schools Sevens yesterday (a Correspondent writes). Appearing in their first final, not to mention their first tournament this season, Canford won an exhilarating 31-26 victory over King's Worcester.

The Dorset school had to overcome Bryanston, local rivals and the Festival holders, in a semi-final that finished 14-14 at the end of normal time. Ben Gollins, the Canford stand-off half, settled the tie in extra time with a sudden-death try.

The final itself was a freescorer affair with eight tries. Gollins, a member of the England Schools Under-18 squad last

season, was again at the forefront of Canford's efforts, scoring two tries and three conversions, as well as putting in some creditable cover tackles.

King's, Worcester, coached by Steve Bain, the former Bedford and Loughborough Students player, had an easier path to the final, beating Christ College, Brecon, 22-7 in the other semi-final.

King's, beaten finalists in the Open tournament in 1989, scored the final's first two tries through Kazuo Matsuno and Alan Trainer, but Gollins's pace and balance revived Canford.

Further scores from Mark Irvine, Nick Makin, the captain, and Charlie Robinson secured Canford's triumph. It was a fitting farewell for Lin Lewis, their coach, who retires at the end of the year.

The surprise of the group stages of the Junior tournament was the failure of Royal Grammar School, Guildford, the holders, to qualify for the knockout stages. Nor did Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, the runners-up last year, qualify for the quarter-finals today.

In the Preparatory Schools tournament, St Olave's, York, the holders, were also knocked out, but the Dragon School, Oxford, runners-up last year, are through to the quarter-finals. Caldicot, often a dangerous side in this event, enjoyed a 32-0 victory over St John's, Beaumont, in the first round of the knockout stage, and are fancied to do well today.

RESULTS FROM THE ROSSLYN PARK SCHOOL'S SEVENS

FESTIVAL TOURNAMENT

KNOCKOUT STAGE (winners of adjacent groups play off against each other; all games with extra time, S/H, unless otherwise stated)

SECOND-FINAL: Bryanston 14, Canford 19 (last); King's 3, Worcester 22, Christ College 7.

FINAL: Canford 31, King's, Worcester 26.

JUNIOR TOURNAMENT

GROUP WINNERS: A: Ethan; B: Alan C: Donhead; D: Dulwich; E: Darfield; F: London Oratory; G: St Olave's, Kent; H: Queen Elizabeth; I: Barnet; J: Bedford; K: Bishop's Stortford; L: Cheltenham; M: Chelmsford; N: St George's, Kent; O: St Edmundsbury; P: St Edmundsbury; Q: St Edmundsbury; R: St Edmundsbury; S: St Edmundsbury; T: St Edmundsbury; U: St Edmundsbury; V: St Edmundsbury; W: St Edmundsbury; X: St Edmundsbury; Y: St Edmundsbury; Z: St Edmundsbury.

QUARTER-FINALS: Bryanston 17, Canford 31; Canford 21; Eastbourne 5;

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THIRD-FINAL: Bryanston 17, Canford 21; King's, Worcester 26.

FOURTH-FINAL: Bryanston 17, Canford 21; King's, Worcester 26.

RESULTS: First: Worcester 26 (R 1 C Holder 91); A R Kumble 5 for 104).

Second: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Third: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Fourth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Fifth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Sixth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Seventh: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Eighth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Ninth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Tenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Eleventh: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Twelfth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Thirteenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Fourteenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Fifteenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Sixteenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Seventeenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Eighteenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Nineteenth: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

Twenty: Bryanston 17, Canford 22; St Olave's, York 22, Christ College 7.

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Forty-three: Bryan

FOOTBALL: NORWEGIAN FORWARD EXPECTED TO PLAY AT FILBERT STREET AS LONDON CLUB PURSUDES PLACE IN EUROPE

Tottenham lifted by Iversen's striking recovery

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

TOTTENHAM Hotspur's modest revival, after successive victories against Sunderland and Leeds United, has resurrected their hopes of qualifying for the UEFA Cup next season. This evening they continue their quest to salvage something from an injury-scarred FA Carling Premiership campaign when they play Leicester City, the Coca-Cola Cup finalists, at Filbert Street.

Though good news from the White Hart Lane treatment room has been scarce, it is likely that Steffen Iversen, the Norway Under-21 striker, will be able to play tonight. He was replaced eight minutes from the end of the 1-0 win against Leeds on Saturday and it was feared that ligament damage to his right knee could prematurely end his season.

Dowie returns to spur Northern Ireland

IAIN DOWIE, the West Ham United striker, yesterday celebrated his comeback from injury with a swift return to the Northern Ireland squad for the back-to-back World Cup qualifying matches against Portugal and Ukraine.

Dowie scored both goals in Northern Ireland's 2-0 win over Albania in their last group nine qualifier and returns after missing the games against Italy and Belgium with a broken ankle.

Bryan Hamilton, the Northern Ireland manager, said: "I'm delighted that Ian is fit again. He always plays by example and is a very important influence on our squad."

The first match is against Portugal in Belfast on Saturday week, with the second away to Ukraine in Kiev four days later. Other notable inclusions are James Quinn, of Blackpool, and Philip Mulryne, of Manchester United, who both scored in the victory over Belgium last month.

Gallagher fights back to achieve his golden goal

Russell Kempson talks to a leading referee whose career was threatened by injury

Euro 96 may have been a chastening experience for England's players and supporters, the penalty shoot-out defeat to Germany in the semi-finals causing suffering on an apparently epidemic scale. Though the lasting memories are unpleasant, especially for Gareth Southgate, time has healed.

For Dermot Gallagher, referee, the European championship nightmare went on and on... for nine months. He snapped an Achilles tendon in his left leg, after only 28 minutes of the group B match between France and Bulgaria, and was forced to retire hurt.

His tournament had ended, barely before it had started, and his career, too, appeared threatened. It took almost

four months for the damage to be correctly diagnosed, then followed 18 days in plaster, after surgery, and two months on crutches. Rehabilitation has been slow, painful and frustrating. Only last week, finally, did he return to the FA Carling Premiership stage.

"I remember awarding a goal kick, running backwards and then turning," Gallagher, who takes charge of the game between Middlesbrough and Blackburn Rovers at the Riverside Stadium tonight, said. "I felt this almighty pain in my leg but thought it was either a spasm or I'd torn a calf muscle. The leg then went dead. I couldn't feel a thing."

Gallagher, unable to walk, handed over the whistle to Paul Durkin. Subsequent treatment plus hours of phys-

iotherapy, failed to pinpoint the root cause and it was not until he underwent an operation in October that progress became tangible. "It was not an ordinary snap of the tendon; it had not split apart," he said. "What had happened was that it had snapped longways, north to south, in an elliptical shape. It was 1½ inches deep and the piece in the middle had decomposed, so it must have been cut out."

As one of the most highly regarded officials in Europe – he refereed the FA Cup final between Liverpool and Manchester United last season and has also blown the

whistle in Brazil, South Africa and Qatar – the inactivity could have proved soul-destroying. The gnawing doubt over whether he would resume his career only added to his sense of foreboding.

"The longer it went on,

there was always that fear," Gallagher, 39, said. "But I knuckled down, kept myself as mentally and physically fit as possible and did everything my physio told me."

"I must have gone to watch

50 matches, from the Premiership right down to the Hellenic League, and I've attended referees' meetings all over the place. I needed to get

out and about. I didn't want people to think I was wallowing in self-pity."

Gallagher, the commercial manager and press relations officer at Witney Town, the Dr Martens League southern division club, is back. He refereed Sheffield Wednesday's 2-1 win against Sunderland last week and Tottenham Hotspur's 1-0 victory against Leeds United on Saturday. He has also taken and passed his fitness test for Fifa, the sport's world governing body.

He needs inserts in his shoes and boots to counteract the legacy of the injury but, otherwise, experiences no ill-effects. "The insert raises the heel, which then contracts the Achilles," he said. "It was a bit strange at first – it felt like walking in a hole, as if I was

going round in circles – but it's all right now."

Gallagher was afforded a generous welcome at Hillsborough and White Hart Lane, disproving the theory that most Premiership clubs view referees as no more than a necessary evil. "It surprised me, but meant a lot," he said.

"The Sheffield game was on a Wednesday, lottery night, and I felt as though I had won it. I felt euphoric after the game and the next day, too. It was great day when I first made it onto the Premiership list and it feels as if I've now done it a second time."

"Every game is now so

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SAILING

Edwards gains backing for global venture

By EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

TRACY EDWARDS was finally able to announce a substantial sponsorship package yesterday which will enable her and an all-women crew to have a go at winning the Jules Verne Trophy for the fastest non-stop circumnavigation of the globe. The Royal SunAlliance will back her to the tune of £4.27 million.

Edwards, however, is delighted to have secured such a substantial sponsorship package, which is made up of a sailing budget thought to be around £2 million, with the remainder devoted to worldwide marketing of the project. "I am thrilled to have the Royal SunAlliance as our sponsor," Edwards said. "From the outset, their enthusiasm has been overwhelming."

In the BT Global Challenge, Richard Merriweather's *Commercial Union* caused a scare yesterday when one of her EPIRB transmitters was swept overboard, automatically activating a satellite distress signal which was picked up in Australia from a position about 1,400 miles east of the Kerguelen Islands. Merriweather quickly reported the loss of the device and the false alarm was identified. Group 4 is the race leader with 3,700 miles to sail to Cape Town.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Pendlebury to coach Blue Sox

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

HALIFAX Blue Sox will today announce the appointment of John Pendlebury, the Wigan assistant coach and a former Halifax player, as their coach.

He will succeed Steve Sims, the Australian, who departed for Thrum Hall three weeks ago.

The appointment of Pendlebury, a member of Halifax's 1987 Challenge Cup-winning side, brings the number of home-grown coaches among the II English Super League clubs to six in an increasing trend away from bringing coaches in from overseas.

Martin Dermott, the former Great Britain hooker, is thinking of retiring after the surprise decision by Warrington this week to give him and two other international players, Willie Swann, of Western Samoa, and Matai Maif, of Tonga, free transfers, after defeats by Salford and Bradford Bulls.

Dermott, 29, was seen as central to Warrington's plans when he arrived last September from Wigan. The last two of his 12 years at Central Park were dogged by persistent injury, but Dermott had fought his way back only to find himself unwanted.

In contrast, these are worring times for McManus, the world No 6. He has drifted to No 11 on the provisional world rankings and, against White, potted only six balls in the first three frames.

RESULT: First round: J White (Eng) bt A McManus (Scot) 6-3

SNOOKER

White has title in his sights

From PHIL YATES
IN CO KILDARE

JIMMY WHITE has not won the Benson and Hedges Irish Masters since 1986, but last night he confidently predicted that he can win the 1997 event here at Goffs on Sunday. Not even the prospect of facing Stephen Hendry, the world champion, in the next round appeared to worry the Londoner, 34, after an impressive 6-3 first-round victory over Alan McManus.

White suffered a mid-match stutter against his Scottish opponent after capturing the opening four frames, but he went on to reach only his second quarter-final of the season.

Hendry has prevailed in their recent meetings in Aberdeen and Bangkok, though their encounter in the Thailand Open last week was a disappointing affair. "Stephen is like a machine, but if I can get past him there is no reason why I can't go all the way," White, whose appearance again drew a large crowd to the Goffs Arena, said. "Every match now is part of the build-up to the world championship."

In contrast, these are worring times for McManus, the world No 6. He has drifted to No 11 on the provisional world rankings and, against White, potted only six balls in the first three frames.

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FA CUP CHAMPIONSHIP ACTION

5/6 PORTO 12/5 DRAW MAN. UTD. 5/2

Dans Arrows, Kick-off 7.30pm, Live on ITV.

CORRECT SCORE

5/1 PORTO 1-0 20/1 DRAW 2-2

13/2 PORTO 2-0 2-1 21/1 MAN. UTD. 1-0

7/1 PORTO 2-1 2-1 12/1 MAN. UTD. 2-0

5/1 DRAW 1-1 22/1 MAN. UTD. 2-1

Other scores on request.

FIRST GOALSCORER

5/1 JARDEL (P) 10/1 EDMILLSON (P)

6/1 DOMINGOS (P) 11/1 BECKHAM (M)

7/1 SOLSKJAER (M) 16/1 JOAO COSTA (P)

15/2 CANTONA (M) 40/1 MAY (M)

Own goals do not count. Other players on request.

Above bets, extra time does not count.

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NATIONAL LEAGUE: Second division: Postponed: South Wales Police v Swansea

RUGBY UNION

WELSH LEAGUE: Second division: Postponed: South Wales Police v Swansea



Dichio, the QPR striker, who has been courted by Sampdoria, the Italian club

Dichio may move to Sampdoria

DANIELE DICHO, the Queens Park Rangers striker, is expected to move to Sampdoria, the Italian league club, on a free transfer this summer.

QPR will not receive a penny if Dichio joins Sampdoria as a free agent under the Bosman ruling. Dichio, 22, could even become an Italy international if he establishes himself in Serie A, despite being born in London, because his father is Italian.

Arsenal yesterday signed Alexander Manninger, 19, a goalkeeper from Casino Graz, the Austrian club, for a fee believed to be around £500,000 after he impressed Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal

manager, in a two-day trial at Highbury. Manninger has returned to Casino Graz for the remainder of the season.

Celtic yesterday learnt that Paolo Di Canio, their striker, will miss their Scottish League match against Dunfermline Athletic on Saturday after receiving a one-match ban.

Hugh Dallas, the referee at the match against Rangers last Sunday, showed Di Canio a yellow card when he squared up to Ian Ferguson after the final whistle at Celtic Park. It technically added up to a sending-off because he had been booked earlier in the game.

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Guscott does his stuff with a vengeance

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

It is a shameful thing: one of the lowest of low emotions. And consequently it is something that goes very, very deep. It is the desire to stuff it up — no, really, I am sorry for this demotic language, but there is no other way of putting it. It is a low thing, and it can only have a low name.

And yet it is one of the most powerful and compelling of all emotions, something that inflames a person with desire, something that in its discharge leaves one almost comatose with self-satisfaction.

Flashback many years: a press awards ceremony. And there is a personal devil emerging from still deeper in my past, one who shuffles heaven and earth in his efforts to get rid of me, and who told me I would never work in national newspapers. "Simon," he said, rather sporting, "Congratulations."

"Thank you," I said. "I owe it all to the way you trained me." And, being a petty person at heart — like every other human being — I glowed like the aurora borealis with self-delight.

And so I send fraternal greetings to Jeremy Guscott. Now, I have never been a member of the Guscott-is-God club; I have found him more frustrating than inspiring. Apart from a few minutes at the end of the game against Ireland, he was omitted by the *sui-dixit* master tactician of an England rugby union coach, Jack Rowell, for all but the final 40 minutes of the five nations' championship.

And did Guscott ever stuff it up Jack Rowell last Saturday. I have never seen him play so brilliantly, with razored incisiveness, with lethal inventiveness, with rat-trap defence. He played like a man in a cold, murderous rage. He sought to pack a full international season into those 40 minutes, and he succeeded admirably in his aim.

His aim was, it seemed, not so much to beat Wales, but the



Fired up for his belated chance to impress, Guscott bursts clear of the Wales defence during an inspired display. Photograph: Marc Aspland

still more laudable ambition of stuffing it up. He made Rowell look a fool and a blind one, a person enslaved by his own sense of self. Guscott made the rugby union world shake its head and say: "Well, if he had played all season, England would probably have beaten France." By easy and not necessarily fair stages, Guscott has made his coach look like the man who cost England a grand slam.

Sweet. From the lowest of motives, the highest of performances: 'twas ever thus in sport. In football it has been elevated to the level of a guiding principle, one that the Italians call *l'immobile legge dell'ex* — the immutable law of the ex.

Which means, if you are Mark Hughes, you are always going to score against Manchester United. A player who has known the hurt of rejection *invariably* scores against his old club. This is not because he knows the ways of his former colleagues and has some kind of tactical advantage, for the same principle would work against him. No. His appetite is the stronger, that's all, and that is because he is inspired by the unhybrid need to stuff it up.

Guscott's spell on the replacements' bench worked for the benefit of his side when at last he was allowed the opportunity. And the bench does seem to have some kind of magic. But few managers, I think, deliberately use the ploy of benching a player in order to inspire him. The magic only works when there is a matter of spite involved.

Faustino Asprilla was bought for vast sums by

Newcastle United and then had his nose put out as still more vast sums were paid for Alan Shearer. But Asprilla's recent Premiership performances, when promoted from the bench in Shearer's absence, have re-inspired a lost-looking side.

Meanwhile, a still more famous bench-warmer remains waiting for the day in which he will make someone suffer. Gianluca Vialli, one of

the most illustrious players in English football, spent another 85 minutes on the bench last Sunday.

"This should not be happening to a great player like this. He deserves more." This was, incredibly, Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager. "It hurts me to keep him on the subs' bench, but at the moment there is nothing I can do."

Vialli has behaved impeccably throughout this difficult

period. But at 32, there is no future in bidding your time. He must be going mad. Sooner or later someone will pay for this, and it could be Chelsea, it could be Gullit.

It has been suggested that Vialli's Italy and Chelsea colleague, Gianfranco Zola, who is carrying a hip injury, needs to take a break. "I don't want to rest," he said. "If I stay well, then I feel I must play in every game. Missing some matches and playing in others is not an option for me. If I am playing well and the team is playing well, it is not wise to make changes."

No. Or you end up a long-term substitute when the team does still better without you. And all you can do is sit there, burning with the urge to stuff it up.

Stuffing it up may be a low emotion, but it brings out all of a player's most combative qualities. Qualities that will be needed by the England cricket team this summer against the rampant Australians. Does Mark Ramprakash, the brilliant Middlesex batsman last seen for England making a pair at Lord's, nurse in his heart the corrosive desire to stuff it up? If so, pick him like a shot.



Vialli, consigned to the bench again, awaits the opportunity to make someone suffer

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 44

CESTUS

(a) A belt or girdle for the waist; particularly that worn by a bride in ancient times. Specifically that of Aphrodite or Venus. From the Greek *keftos* stitched. Also a contrivance consisting of thongs of bullhide, loaded with strips of iron and lead, and wound round the hands. Used by supporting Roman basters as a protection and to give greater weight to the blows. Latin *cestus*, commonly regarded as an anomalous form of *cestrum* to buff. But probably influenced by the girdle.

CHAKRA

(e) A circular weapon, used by the Sikhs. From the Sanskrit for a wheel. The *chakra* or *chakra* is a thin knife-edged ring of flat steel, a severe missile in skilled hands. Also mystic circle placed in the hands of pictured Hindu gods. In Yoga, one of the centres of spiritual and cerebral power in the human body. Also the emblem on the flag of India.

CHALAZA

(c) Each of the two membranous twisted strings by which the yolk-sac of an egg is bound to the lining membrane at the ends of the shell, and kept near the middle of the albumen, with the germinating point uppermost. From the Greek word for haul, or any small lump or knot like a ball-stone.

CHANDLER'S WOBBLE

(b) A movement in the Earth's axis of rotation that causes latitude to vary with a period of 14 months. An eponym of Sir Carlo Chandler (1846-1913), an American astronomer. Chandler's discovery was facilitated by his invention of the almanac, a device for measuring the positions of stars relative to a circle centred at the zenith rather than to the meridian.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... Qd1! 2 Kd2 [Qxd4+ mating] 2... Qe2+ 3 Kh3 Bxe4 and the White position collapses.

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When the film cameras first went to war

First night back from holiday and what do we have? Child sex abuse, forcibly arranged marriages and the Boer War. I was almost too depressed to begin. By the end of the evening I was still depressed (these are not exactly subjects to gladden the heart, however well they are tackled) but at least my faith in documentary-making had been restored. Two of the three films were very impressive, leaving just one to be filed away for later under "well-intentioned failure".

Pick of the night — just — was *Timewatch*: The Boer War (BBC2), which had the edge largely because it dealt with a subject that was not just unpalatable but also unfashionable. For it is a cruel paradox that the millions of us moved regularly to tears by the losses of the First World War know next to nothing about the events of 15 years earlier. Somehow, it is too far away and too long ago to count.

These images, and the accounts written by the likes of Winston Churchill, Edgar Wallace and

William Cran, writer and director of *Timewatch*, lost little time in putting that right. Indeed, so little time that just occasionally — as generals wanted, but the whole story — it was difficult keeping up. But if you'd caught a couple of episodes of *Rhodes* and knew your Ladysmith, your problems managed.

Cran's initial thesis was that the Boer War was effectively the first conflict fought under what quickly became the unrelenting gaze of the mass media. As opening scenes go, this was interesting enough and the opening scenes were duly filled by flickering film footage recorded by pioneering cameramen such as William Dickson and by black and white stills taken by the first generation of photo-journalists. But this was not the end, more a means to the end.

These images, and the accounts

written by the likes of Winston Churchill, Edgar Wallace and

Arthur Conan Doyle, were used to tell the story of the war. Not just the story that the British Army censors wanted, but the whole story — the terrible tactical blunders that were made and would be made again in far worse effect 15 years later, the Boers' switch to guerrilla warfare, the British use of concentration camps, the scorched earth policy... and so it went on.

The reports by Churchill, Wallace and the correspondent from *The Daily Telegraph* who questioned the wisdom of advancing slowly in close ranks towards an enemy armed with Mauser rifles were read with the sort of pukka accent that you would expect. Ditto Dickson, who by virtue of being a Scot, got the dulcer Bill Paterson. The correspondents from the *Manchester Guardian*, however, were not so fortunate. Their reports were read in a nasal, northern

whine that bordered on parody.

Linked together in time-honoured *Timewatch* style with modern footage of the battlefields and the faultless hindsight of a fairly partisan bunch of military historians, the contemporary accounts allowed Cran to hit both his targets: to tell the story of an often forgotten war and to show how it served as a ghastly rehearsal for what was to follow.

Klein was more impartial than that summary would suggest. She gave social services and the police the chance to tell their story, just as she did the family whose lives have

been permanently blighted by a remark made by a three-year-old to her playgroup leader. Daddy had committed the unpardonable crime of not being very good at wiping his daughter's bottom. Cue social services, the police, the full Big Brother disaster.

No such problems, I suspect, await *Witness: Loss of Innocence* (Channel 4). That's because the starting point for Leanne Klein's absorbing film was basically that shared by untrained middle-class dinner parties — that actually there's not much child abuse around, but there are an awful lot of interfering busybodies trying to prove otherwise and doing immense damage to family relationships in the process.

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REVIEW



Matthew Bond

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SPORT

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Fans' behaviour under scrutiny

United need peace and prosperity

FROM ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT
IN OPORTO

AS Manchester United's flight circled Oporto airport yesterday, held up in the traffic swelled by the team's 10,000 travelling supporters, Alex Ferguson, the manager, reflected on the modicum of caution it is his duty to instil.

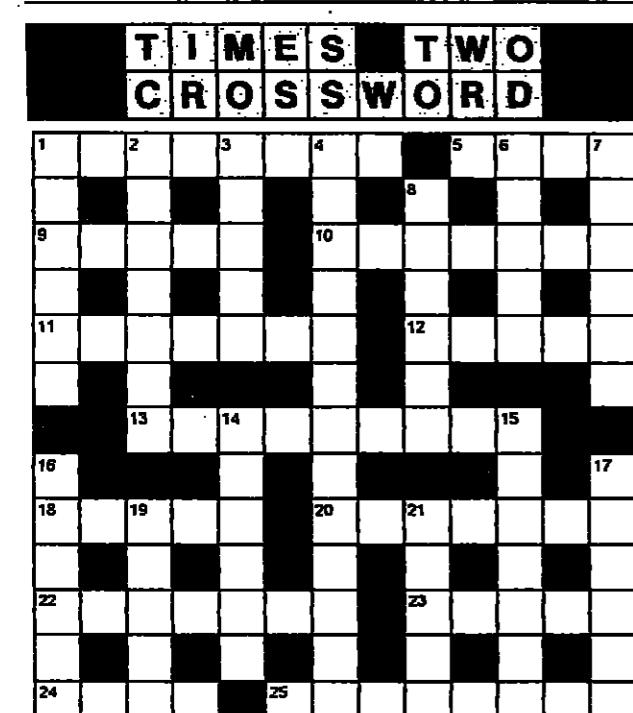
"We don't want to do anything silly," he opined. "It would take a tremendously inspired performance by Porto to win this tie now. But they will have their pride, they will come out looking for that early goal, and we will have to be professional, to do our job properly."

That said, the mission is, of course, well in hand. But taking a four-goal lead to a team whose supporters are as passionate as any in Europe does not invite complacency. History rules it out, for 19 years ago, in this very stadium, United lost 4-0.

Nevertheless, England needs two victories tonight. Not since 1985, the year of Heysel, have the English champions reached the semi-finals of the European Cup, nor have so many English supporters been abroad to follow their club since then.

They must beware the intoxication of glory. It was there in both airports yesterday. As the United players filed through the customs lounge in Manchester they walked into a throng of backslapping supporters, many of them already reeking of drink. And as they disembarked after the 2½-hour flight to northern Portugal, where the temperatures approached 25C, the hordes were there again.

One of them, entertainingly enough, took a ride on the baggage carousel, filming the players and directors on a camcorder as he was carried by. So far, so good. But in the stadium tonight there will be



No 1045

- ACROSS**
 1 Put a number to (S)
 5 Knock (not); portion of ticket (4)
 9 Burning (5)
 10 Alliment (7)
 11 Drown; succumb (2,5)
 12 Sift (5)
 13 Really enjoy oneself (4,1,4)
 18 Improvised (2,3)
 (Esp. govt) income (7)
 22 Protecting fortifications; defence (7)
 23 Instrument; flower (5)
 24 Arduous journey (4)
 25 Trend; inclination (5)
- SOLUTION TO NO 1044**
ACROSS: 6 Squeezed 7 Prism 9 Naked 10 Tenaille 11 Trompe l'oeil 14 Smorgasbord 17 Rhombus 19 Agate 21 Soggy 22 Modular
DOWN: 1 Bulk 2 Headlong 3 Belt up 4 Open 5 Dividend 6 Sink 8 Mildly 11 Thorough 12 Leonardo 13 Osiris 15 Sesame 16 Fear 18 Boys 20 Axle
- SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1040**
 In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 6 Tooth and nail 7 Junket 8 Impugn 9 Memo 10 Pot belly 12 Implied 16 Tube 18 Friend 20 Dorsal 21 Paradise Lost
DOWN: 1 Bookworm 2 Shut up 3 Anoint 4 Snap 5 Fingal 6 Trove 11 Exterior 13 Norway 14 Caddie 15 Ladder 17 Blast 19 Exam

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND'S domestic or international network is M Cranford, Dunblane, Perthshire.

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450 police and outside it there will be many more forces of the law, including armed units specially flown in from Lisbon. That old, dangerous cocktail, Latin chaos and the English reputation for violence, is coming together.

For the most part, these supporters will be just what United need in the Estadio das Antas. They will pit their voices against the 40,000 home fans in the 50,000-capacity stadium.

The British Embassy is

hoping for peace but knows that only 6,400 of United's

TEAMS

FC PORTO (probable, 4-4-1-1): Hílario — J Pinto, Almeida, J Costa, F Mendes, L Barroso, L Drúška — Z Zahović — Jardel.

MANCHESTER UNITED (probable, 4-4-1-1): P Schmeichel — G Neville, D May, G Pallister, D Innes — D Becham, R Keane, N Butt, S Carragher, S Giggs, J Cruff — E Cantona — G O'Sullivan.

Referee: K Nielsen (Denmark).

fans have been allocated tickets for the area of the ground earmarked for them. The rest are either in possession of tickets for the FC Porto stands (acquired from rogue travel agents and touts), or hoping to buy them on the streets.

Let us hope that the match remains the focal point. Ferguson can relax as much as his combative nature will allow, for the pressure is on his opponent, Antonio Oliveira, the successor to Bobby Robson as the Porto coach, has gone to ground. Having incurred a £5,000 fine for refusing to meet the media after the humiliation at Old

Heath, he is unlikely to start with Andy Cole, whose form lately has been the best of his United career, because why should United risk a goalscorer whose left thigh is sore? Indeed, the emphasis will be on containing the Portuguese pride and passion in midfield.

Gary Neville trained last night and appears ready to play despite two stitches in a swollen ankle, but Ryan Giggs, who probably gave the performance of his life in tearing Porto asunder two weeks ago, has a hamstring strain and may not be risked.

Hence Ferguson may use Jordi Cruff on the left of midfield. But, no matter, for Porto to rediscover their thread and to overcome the palpable fear which Hílario, their goalkeeper, admits he felt in advance of meeting Cantona and Co the first time.

Dioch departs, page 45
 Midweek View, page 46

JURGEN KLINSMANN, the Germany captain, announced yesterday that he will be leaving Bayern Munich at the end of the season. The surprise move is sure to alert English clubs and lead to increased speculation that he could return to the FA Carling Premiership that he graced with Tottenham Hotspur two seasons ago.

Klinsmann, 32, is unlikely to return to White Hart Lane, which he left only 12 months into his two-year contract. His premature departure, after he had scored 29 goals, proved bitter and acrimonious, with Alan Sugar, the Tottenham chairman, claiming that he had been betrayed.

Although Klinsmann is understood to have offers to play in Spain, Everton and Nottingham Forest could also join the chase. Each has

substantial transfer funds at its disposal and Joe Royle, the Everton manager, has long been an admirer of the much-travelled forward.

Royle flew to Germany to watch him play for Bayern in the Bundesliga recently and is keen to strengthen a side that lacks a consistent goalscorer.

He is also believed to be preparing an improved offer for Trevor Sinclair, the Queens Park Rangers winger.

Klinsmann has decided to invoke a clause in his contract, which is not due to expire until June next year, that allows him to leave on a free transfer at the end of the season. He has become disillusioned with the bickering at the club and at criticism from Franz Beckenbauer, the Bayern chairman, and Lothar Matthäus, the club captain.

I had a talk with Beckenbauer last week and told him I would probably go

abroad next season," Klinsmann, who has also played for Stuttgart, Internazionale and AS Monaco, said yesterday. "I don't seem to fit in here. I wanted to tell Bayern now so that they can plan for the future."

Beckenbauer, who played the key role in bringing Klinsmann back to Germany,



Klinsmann: disillusioned

said: "It's a shame. We wanted to keep Jürgen a lot longer. But it's his decision and we have to accept it."

George Graham's troubled reign as manager of Leeds United hit a new low yesterday when Carlton Palmer, the former England midfield player, was left out of the team for the Tottenham match.

His written transfer request will go before the board of directors with Graham's recommendation. "What I will be recommending remains private," Graham said, "but I am not surprised by his request."

Andrei Kanchelskis, the former Manchester United and Everton winger, is reported to be unsettled at Fiorentina, the club he joined from Everton only two months ago. "He has been catapulted into a new world and is obviously handicapped by the language problem," Luciano Luna, the Fiorentina managing director, said.

Yeoobah, the Ghana striker, was fined two weeks' pay for ripping off his shirt and throwing it at Graham when he was substituted in the 1-0 Premiership defeat by Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane on Saturday.

Graham would not disclose the amount of the fine. "That will remain private but I have told Tony to get back to his playing weight," Graham said. "That means he will have to lose just under a stone. I've looked at the weight he was when he came here and the

Scottish clubs benefit by £7.25m

By MARK SOISTER

AFTER one of their worst seasons in the five nations' championship, which included three record defeats, Scotland face the prospect of permanent relegation to the second division of world rugby union unless drastic action is taken to bolster the domestic game.

Duncan Paterson, the Scottish Rugby Union's convenor of rugby, outlined his concerns at Murrayfield yesterday as the union announced plans to put £7.25 million, largely from income from the sale of tele-

vision rights, into club rugby over the next three years as part of its commitment to develop the game on a three-tier basis.

However, the vehicle for international success will remain professional districts, each with its own administration, professional coaches — who will be announced in a fortnight — and ultimately its own stadium.

Unless results improve in the European Cup next season via Scotland's three representatives, Caledonia, Scottish

Borders and Glasgow, Paterson believes that Scotland will be squeezed out of the competition, with dire consequences.

We are hanging on by our fingernails," Paterson said.

"Ten or 12 clubs in England and France want our places in Europe now.

If that happens we could slide into oblivion.

What we are trying to do is

have a three-tier system and fast-track as fast as possible to ensure our international survival."

Five nations' threat, page 44

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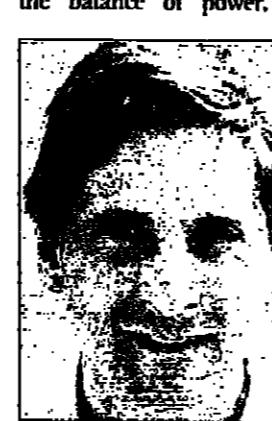
Whiff of revolution in air at Sussex

Pat Gibson finds entrenched positions that promise a stormy annual meeting

Like John Major, Ken Hopkins, the chairman, is turning a blind eye to the opinion polls. "As far as I am concerned," he said, "we were elected by the membership to serve for three years and in my case I will not seek re-election until February next year. If the vote goes against us at the special meeting, that will be a different matter."

Not the general election, but something of far greater importance to those who care about such things — the annual meeting of Sussex County Cricket Club, whose members have been roused from their deck-chairs by their former fast bowler, Tony Pigott, who has a vision of the future and the soundbites to go with it.

Hopkins' resolution, calling for a vote of no confidence in the committee and their immediate resignation en bloc, may not be tabled until a special meeting, which he has forced on April 8. However, if the annual meeting — switched from the county ground at Hove to Brighton's Grand Hotel because of the expected turnout — is hostile towards them, they may have no alternative but to go.



Barclay: key player

though it was suggested last night that he was drifting towards the old guard.

A meeting between Hopkins and Pigott did little to help. "We did find some common ground in that we both care about Sussex," Pigott said. "Where we differ is that so far no one has actually taken responsibility for what has happened at the club and no one, apart from myself, has actually stood up to be counted."

David Graveney, the new chairman of England selectors, yesterday rebuked Raymond Illingworth, his predecessor, for suggesting that Michael Atherton should be replaced by either Nasser Hussain or Adam Hollioake as captain of England for the one-day internationals against Australia this summer. "Ray had two years as a selector," Graveney said. "He's had his time and now it's down to Mike Gatting, Graham Gooch and myself to sort out which is the best way to sort out the problem."

Naked officialdom, page 5

RUGBY UNION 44

Canford triumph at first attempt in Rosslyn Park sevens

for 3rd

